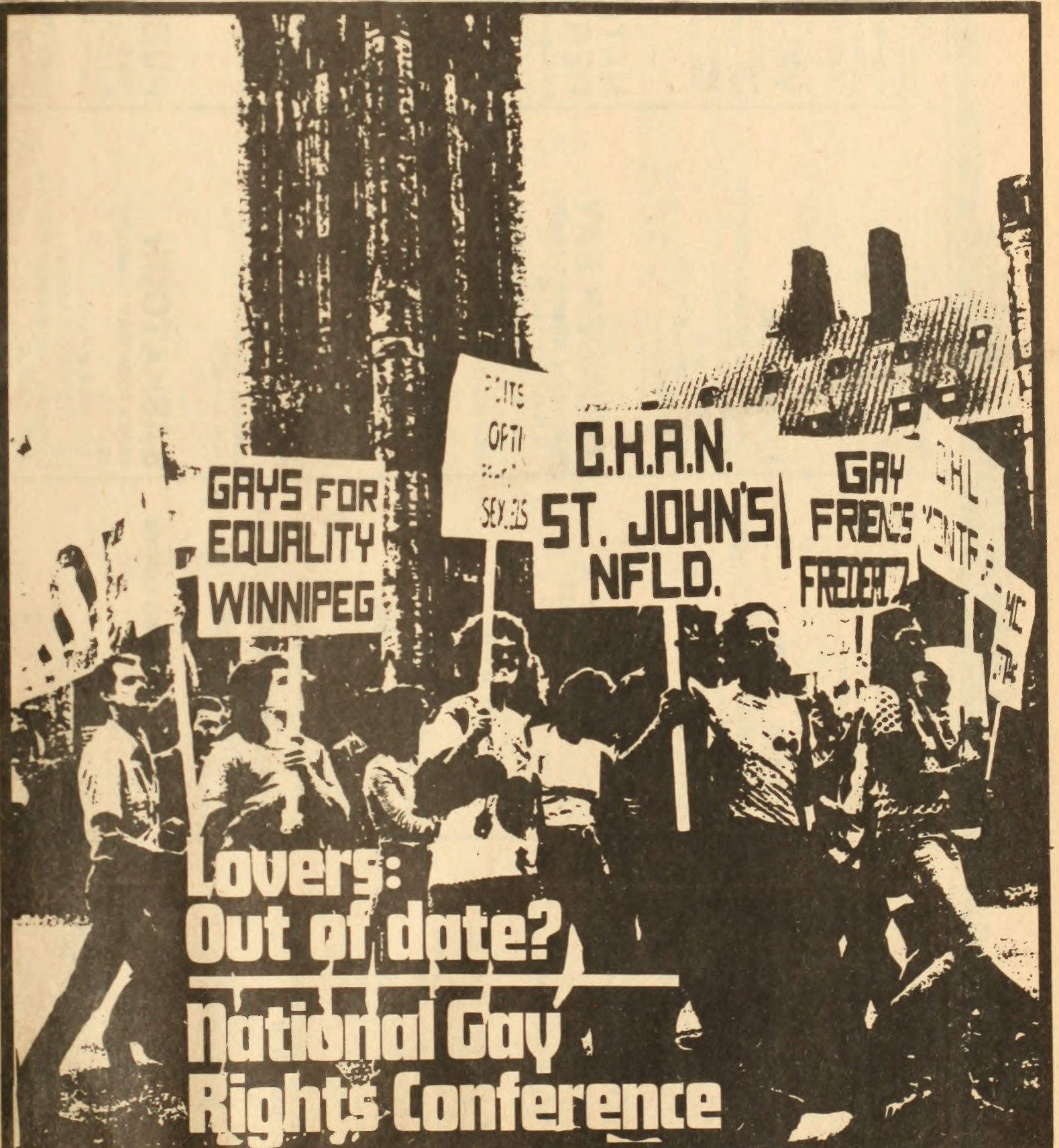


# THE **Body Politic** 50¢

Gay Liberation Journal No. 20 October



**Lovers:  
Out of date?**

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**National Gay  
Rights Conference**





# Obscenity laws & the uses of sexual guilt

by Gerald Hannon

Item: Issue 18 of *The Body Politic* is ordered removed from the stands by the Toronto Morality Squad.

Item: Macmillan's Canada is informed by York Crown Attorney Peter Rickaby that if it attempts to market *Show Me!*, a new sex-ed book for children and their parents it will be charged with distributing obscene material.

Item: The *Body Politic* receives an unusual amount of mail commenting on its decision to publish the Harold Lloyd comic strip. About 50% of the letters suggest that we got what we deserved — "If you insist on publishing dirt, you've got to face the consequences."

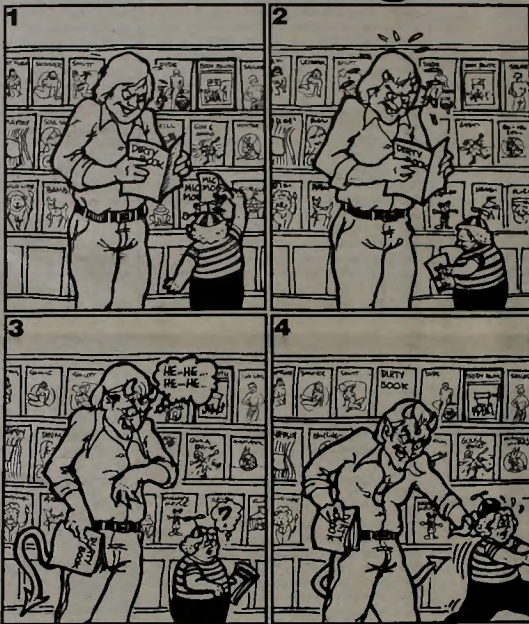
Unrelated items? I don't think so. Yet it would not astonish me if the half dozen or so readers who thought *The Body Politic* justly confiscated saw little similarity between our plight and the current fuss over *Show Me!* On the one hand, they would argue, you have a serious book produced by a noted author and photographer, a book which is trying to enlighten in a well, yes, explicit, but certainly *respectable* way. On the other hand, you have a crudely drawn comic strip which seems to devote an inordinate number of frames to close-ups of cocks being sucked. No respectable doctor's name in the by-line. Very definitely appealing to prurient interests. Obscene.

It's a common enough viewpoint these days. You can depict or describe most anything if it's educational, or "artistic," or has redeeming social value, or contributes to the public good — the

expression varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, but the meaning is always clear: if the material exists for no other reason than to sexually stimulate, it is harmful and dangerous and should be banned. Yet to my knowledge, there has never been a single responsible study which has shown that free access to so-called "obscene" materials leads directly or indirectly to socially disruptive acts. I quote the doctors Kronhausen, American researchers in the field:

"... what scientific opinion has been voiced on the subject only supports our own impression that there is little positive contribution from the reading of erotic material (or the viewing of pictorial material) and overt anti-social acts." Common sense lends credence. If *doing it* is generally conceded to be one of your great human experiences, it is difficult to see why reading about or looking at it should have such dire consequences. It is like expecting us to believe that though fine dining is a pleasurable and socially respectable experience, pictures of a well appointed table might provoke aberrant and hungry hordes to plunder the local loaf.

Nevertheless, the impression remains (and sustains the legal structure) that certain depictions of sexual activities are obscene. That way madness lies — for the



next logical step is to try and define (sufficiently clearly not to make legislation laughably vague) exactly which of the many permutations of sexual congress can be depicted with impunity. Most discussions of obscenity stride purposefully into that morass. We shall not. Else we might be in the position of the State of Massachusetts legislature in having drawn up a document so trilling as to be indictable! The real question is whether there should be any laws restricting what people can see and read. Since there *are*, one can safely assume that they are there for a reason; that something is at stake. What?

We can thank Ontario Premier Bill Davis for the answer to that one. It has been quite clear to everyone, even the commentators in the daily press, that the recent purity push simply means that the Conservative Government in Ontario is in trouble, and has cynically chosen the moral re-arranging-law-and-order option open to governments falling at the polls. In other words, it was a *political* decision, a decision which clearly has nothing to do with effect body bur parlours, or sex-ed books, or raunchy comic strips may or may not have on society. It is a decision the Conservatives hope will persuade people to vote for them this fall. Simple as that. Is it such a

step then, to wonder whether all decisions to prosecute material under the obscenity laws are merely political options selected as circumstances require? Especially when there seems to be not a shred of evidence to suggest that society is likely to crumble should people have free access to erotic materials, "hard core" or otherwise?

Not in every case will it be as clear as it has been in Ontario recently to see what the powers that be have to gain from the suppression of "pornography." Yet in each case government gains something. And on our expense.

Ours is a Judeo-Christian society. That is important to remember in this context, because if "government" has an interest in suppressing erotic material, it simply exploits a tendency already latent in our culture. Our religions, and the dominant philosophical traditions of the last few thousand years, stress the mind-spirit/body dichotomy. The former is "higher", more valuable; its cultivation more worthy and beneficial. The body is "lower", untrustworthy, full of hungers and demands which make the perfection of the "spirit" more difficult. That assumption operates in all of us to a greater or lesser extent — it is the philosophical ground of our existence.

In its most banal and pitiful form it is prudishness — a simple-minded and tormented horror of anything physical, a negation of exuberance, a merciless tilting of the "spiritual." To the more sophisticated it prompts the differentiation between "good" and "bad" taste. Good taste is when the camera pans from the love-making (not screwing) couple to vistas of wild flowers or gulls squawking over deserted beaches, or whatever visual metaphor the director chooses to demonstrate that this sexual episode is after all part of the great spiritual scheme of nature. Good taste is, explicit pictures of two very nervous people "making love" with an accompanying text about responsibility (in essence, *Show Me!*). Bad taste is less technically proficient photographic work without the text.

Without anything to suggest that the rampaging physicality of it all is redeemed by a desire to instruct or uplift, I suppose the ultimate refinement of this attitude was contained in an essay on obscenity that I encountered in a noted philosophical journal. The author decoded the ludicrous nature of most of the arguments developed to justify the suppression of erotic materials. He went so far as to declare that "pornography" should be available to all. And yet... there followed a long, liberal sigh of regret. Regret for the inevitable "cheapening" of the act of love which must surely follow, snipped forever of its mystery. No longer the ultimate experience between a man and a woman. (Other combinations were not considered.) Just one more ordinary act in the ordinary ritual of

living. In the final analysis what we have here is the prude who has gone to college — what is clearly an aversion to the merely physical has been dressed up as regret for the passing of the sacramental from the field of human relationships.

Guilt. More specifically, sexual guilt. It clouds the sexual dreams and fantasies of the western world. It is a direct result of the mind/body fallacy because mind is never quite convinced that what body is doing is sufficiently mind-oriented to be defensible. Government enters here. It is in the interests of every totalitarian government to have the populace beset by an enervating energy and pervasive sense of guilt — not just in sexual matters, of course. Guilt for not having one's "papers" in order. Guilt for being on the street too late at night, even though one may have a perfectly legitimate reason for being there. And so on. (We do not live in a totalitarian state. We live in an incipiently totalitarian state that has perfected the techniques of repression and uses them whenever necessary. Quebec, for example, in October of 1970. The jury verdict reversal in the Morgenthau case.)

The maintenance of an atmosphere of sexual guilt is the major political reason for the presence and enforcement of obscen-



## Body Politic

Gay Liberation Journal

Vol. 10 September-October 1979

"The liberation of homosexuals can only be the work of homosexuals themselves."

Kurt Hiller 1921

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Cover: Some of the more than 200 participants in the Gay Rights march on Parliament Hill on June 30 following the National Conference.  
Photo: Gerald Hannon.

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- Interview with lesbian writer Jane Rule
- Psychiatrist analyzed: a sequel to Capital Punishment by Michael Rordon
- Further thoughts on obscenity: nudity and sexism

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## The Body Politic

is published six times a year by The Body Politic Collective to advance the liberation of gay people in Canada by providing opportunities for them to talk to each other about themselves and their place in society. By virtue of its success The Body Politic cannot speak for all gay people.

The Body Politic Collective is a group of people who regularly give their time and labour to the production of The Body Politic. Editorial responsibility for The Body Politic lies with the Collective. The Collective makes no profit, all income is re-spent on The Body Politic or other aspects of the gay liberation movement in Canada. The office of the Collective is located at 183 Carlton Street in Toronto.

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### WE WELCOME SUBMISSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF ALL KINDS:

articles, letters, opinions, short stories, poems, graphics, drawings. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your submission. Articles of a sufficiently controversial nature may be accompanied by comment by the collective or others who consider qualified to write on the subject. All letters will be considered for publication unless clearly marked not for publication.

## Editorials

### One struggle

The National Gay Rights Conference held in Ottawa at the end of June accomplished even more than its hard-working organizers had hoped. Delegates not only reached a consensus on a comprehensive ten-point programme for the newly formed National Gay Rights Coalition, but also dealt wisely with the controversial issue of age of consent.

The Body Politic endorses the demands hammered out at the conference, demands which cover the major areas of discrimination in housing, employment and law enforcement.

The arguments which convinced the majority of the delegates to vote for revocation of all age-of-consent laws must now be repeated and expanded upon for the education of the rest of the gay community. For many have called the concern for the sexual rights of youth peripheral to the fight for gay rights.

We must see that sexual liberation in one area cannot be easily separated from liberation in another. A letter printed elsewhere in this issue, for example, questions the relevance of abortion to gay rights. Why, it asks, did the national conference pass a resolution supporting Dr Henry Morgentaler and calling for his immediate release?

Let the preamble to the resolution answer: "the same Criminal Code that attempts to legislate the behaviour of homosexuals also seeks to impose restrictions on the sexual expression of the entire female population by outlawing abortion except under the most restrictive conditions."

Dr Morgentaler has fought courageously for the rights of women and he has been punished for it. That he remains in custody after being acquitted by two juries is a grotesque injustice.

Sexual freedom for youth, for women, for gays—these are all part of the same struggle. We can ill afford to ignore their interconnection. The same elements in our society conspire to control us all.

### War on sin

Election time in Ontario is here. The periodic orgy of cirruses and demagoguery to decide which interest group can fool more people on voting day.

The Big Blue Machine is worried. It is looking for an issue. Not that there aren't real issues around, mind you -- unemployment, city deterioration, northern underdevelopment, education, pollution...

The problem is that the Blue Machine has been in power for more than thirty years. It's hard to find someone to blame things on when you've been the ones in charge. As well, Bill Davis's youthful and dynamic image is becoming tarnished, seedy even. The smell of rotten porkbarrel hangs in the air of Queen's Park.

But Bill Davis hasn't been in politics that long for nothing. He is well aware of the last card of the hard-pressed conservative politician -- sin.

And for those of you who haven't studied primitive psychology: for Bill Davis and his kind, sin means one thing only -- sex.

It's a clever trump card. No one could blame sex on Bill Davis. Few people even imagine most of the Conservative cabinet to be capable of it. So William dons his shiny white armour and tilts toward Yonge Street.

If it were just an attack on the seamy side of Yonge St.'s exploitation of the loneliness and sexual frustration of Torontonians, we might be inclined to sit back and watch the show.

Unfortunately, it's much more dangerous. Davis's crusade against sinful sex will in the long run probably do very little about body-rub parlours or the rest. After all, body-rub owners are just clever capitalist entrepreneurs who pay their taxes like any honest conservative.

The problem is how the crusade will really be used. Censorship, police harassment of bookstore owners and attacks on the gay community are the only likely outcome of such politics.

Mr. Davis may not be able to find a scapegoat for the real problems plaguing the people of Ontario. But if he can work up enough hysteria about sin and blame that on homosexuals and prostitutes, he may be able to squeak through this fall election.

The Body Politic has already felt the first squeeze of Davis's law and order and old-time religion tactics with the censure of issue 18. What the rest of the community may suffer before the election will probably depend on how scared the Conservatives are running.

Somebody once said you can't fool all of the people all of the time. The Conservatives are lucky. They only have to do it once every four years.

## Letters

### More on Cuba

It was only after considerable soul-searching that I decided to write -- openly and with anger -- about the oppression of gay people in Cuba. Unlike John Southin, I could not in good conscience continue to work quietly, behind the scenes, nor could I accept any longer rigid notions about what was or was not "The Revolution". Nor do I believe that my residence in the United States of America requires me to be silent about the oppression of gay people in the Third World countries. I studied and admired the Cuban Revolution for many years, and one thing I learned was the value of honesty and the importance of commitment to struggle. For me, what I have written about the oppression of gay people in Cuba is as honest as I can

Continued on page 28

## Ottawa

# Third national conference launches gay rights coalition



photo: Grant Kayser

Gay men and women from all across Canada gathered in the University of Ottawa's Fautoux Hall last Dominion Day weekend (June 27-30) for the purpose of founding the National Gay Rights Coalition (NGRC). When the first session of the National Gay Rights Conference came to order on June 27, it was apparent that the conference was the largest and most geographically representative meeting of gays ever to take place in Canada. And by the time the conference adjourned three days later, it had also established itself as the most militant gathering of the gay movement to date.

About two hundred people took part in the conference, which included caucuses, workshops, street theatre, and a demonstration on Parliament Hill. The more than 150 registered participants represented almost every city in Canada. In addition to the predictably large attendance from Ontario and Quebec, the western provinces were strongly represented and the first Atlantic provinces contingent ever to attend a national conference included delegates from St. John's, Halifax, and Fredericton.

The structure and agenda of the conference, which was organized by Gays of Ottawa, played a large part in the militization of the participants. Among the many workshops planned in advance were several which were intended to allow informed discussion of issues relevant to the formulation of the programme of NGRC, such as the defence of John Duesen and the controversial age-of-consent question. In these workshops, activist conference participants were able to influence some conservative elements, drawing them forward and into a militant perspective. The success of this strategy was illustrated by the debate around the volatile age-of-consent issue which took

place in a special session of delegates called to adopt the structure and programme of the NGRC.

## Volatile issue

The law presently sets the age of consent for heterosexual activity at 16 generally, and as low as 14 in special circumstances. But the legal age of consent for homosexual activity is 21. The removal of this discriminatory difference is a long-standing demand of the gay movement. However, there has been disagreement within the movement on the character of law reform in this area.

Militant gay organizations, led by the Vancouver Gay Alliance Toward Equality (GATE), maintain that the gay movement must demand the abolition of age-of-consent laws. They point out that such laws attempt to deprive younger gays of the sexual use of their own bodies, in much the same way as the law, before being reformed in 1969, negated the right of homosexuals and lesbians to enjoy sexual activities. The militants argue that the gay movement must uphold the rights of all gay people, not just the rights of those above a certain age determined by lawmakers.

Conservatives in the movement, on the other hand, have argued that gays should demand a uniform age of consent, that is, a single age of consent, enshrined in law, which would govern all sexual activity, whether heterosexual or homosexual. Relying on the unscientific assertion that sexual activity of any kind is harmful to people below a certain age, some supporters of a uniform age of consent maintain that such a

law is both legitimate and necessary. Others express support in principle for the abolition of all age of consent laws, but argue that to make such a demand at the present time would simply cater to the stereotyping of gays as childmolesters. These people support the demand for a uniform age of consent out of political expediency.

The first serious clash between these two opposing views took place in the fall of 1973, when the Toronto Gay Alliance Toward Equality (GATE), on behalf of the National Gay Election Coalition, was preparing a questionnaire on gay issues to be mailed to all candidates in the anticipated 1974 federal election. The question whether candidates should be asked to support a uniform age-of-consent law or the abolition of age-of-consent laws produced a bitter but inconclusive exchange between the Community Homophile Association of Toronto and Vancouver GATE. The issue was not resolved and the questionnaire in its final form asked candidates to support either of the two positions on age of consent.

Anticipating a prolonged and heated debate around the question of which position NGRC should adopt on the issue, the Ottawa conference organizers planned a workshop which would discuss it and make a recommendation to the conference. Because many conservative delegates chose to attend other workshops scheduled for the same period, supporters of the abolition of age-of-consent laws enjoyed a stronger position in the workshop than they did in the conference as a whole. During the three-hour discussion, significant inroads were made in the forces which opposed abolition. The Community Homophile Association of Toronto, for example, was won over to the abolitionist



view. Although other conservative elements held their ground, the workshop voted substantially in favour of recommending the abolition of age-of-consent laws as the official NGRC position.

## Coalition programme

The conference met in a special session on June 29 to consider proposals for the structure and programme of NGRC. When the delegates took up the matter of the coalition's demands, a motion was placed on the floor to accept the recommendation of the age-of-consent workshop. Because of the unrepresentative character of the workshop mentioned above, the acceptance of the recommendation was far from certain. The forces favouring acceptance were led by Vancouver GNT, while opposition was headed up by the Ottawa branch of the Metropolitan Community Church. During the debate, it was clear that many wavering delegates were deciding in favour of abolition of the age-of-consent laws. Windsor Gay Unity representative Harold Desmarais probably spoke for many others when he observed: "We're going to be hit with this child-molester stereotype whatever we do, so we might as well support abolition".

In a brief but moving speech, one of the younger conference delegates, the representative of the usually conservative Metropolitan Association of London Ontario, said: "Yesterday, in the workshop, I argued against the abolition of the age-of-consent laws. But later in the evening, I phoned my lover in London. He thought I would vote in favour of abolition. My lover is 16; if it hadn't been for him, I would still be in the closet. I will vote for the abolition of all age-of-consent laws. I know the arguments about this, but I feel that it is right". This proved to be the turning point in the debate. Just before the vote, chairperson David Garmaise called for a brief recess. When the session resumed ten minutes later, the room was tense but quiet. The chair ordered a roll-call vote because of the controversial nature of the question about to be decided. Halfway through the vote, it was clear that the motion would carry, and when the voting was completed, the delegates had gone in favour of demanding an end to all age-of-consent legislation by a margin of more than two to one. A round of applause greeted the announcement of the results of the vote.

The special NGRC session adopted a democratic structure and a ten-point programme for the national coalition. At the request of the conference women's caucus, the NGRC includes a permanent Women's Caucus to represent the particular interests of lesbians. It was decided that the primary focus of the coalition for the present time would be the campaign to force changes in the Im-



photo: Gerald Hammon

migration Act. In accordance with a resolution passed by last year's national conference, the NGRC Statement of Principles recognizes public struggle as the principle means of securing its demands.

## Enthusiastic march

The vote on the age-of-consent question revealed a militant mood which dominated the final two days of the conference and reached its peak in a gay rights march on the evening of June 29. At last year's national conference in Winnipeg, a significant block of delegates objected to the inclusion of a march on the Manitoba legislature in the conference agenda and declined to participate. The Ottawa march, by contrast, produced no such questioning of the value of public demonstrations. About 250 people, including conference participants and local gays, joined in the march which wound through the capital from the Supreme Court to Parliament Hill. The enthusiastic and raucous marchers chanted slogans in both national languages: Gay Rights Now!, Gais, exigons nos droits!, Gays must control their fate, not the church and not the state! and Gais, femmes, dans les rues! At the Parliament buildings, the marchers rallied to hear brief addresses by speakers from Vancouver, Saskatoon, Waterloo, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. Finally, the NGRC demands were read out in French and English, each one followed by chants and applause from the marchers. The demonstration ended with a circle dance in front of a discon-

ted line of Mounties.

Media coverage of the march was good. A segment of the CBC late evening national news was devoted to the march, reporting the formation of NGRC and correctly emphasizing its demand for changes in the Immigration Act, tying this into the national debate on immigration policy. The success of the march in capturing the attention of the national media was of inestimable value to the gay movement. The CBC national news has an audience of millions, among whom number many thousands of gays who, because of the coverage of the gay rights march, are now aware that homosexuals and lesbians are fighting for their rights.

The potentially galvanizing effect on gay people of a militant gay movement was demonstrated at a dance sponsored by Gays of Ottawa later that evening. A television had been set up in the hall so that any coverage of the march could be watched by people at the dance. As the news began, the music was turned off and there was a cheer when the marchers appeared on the screen. As the segment ended, some of the viewers picked up the televised chants and within seconds, caught up in the militant spirit of the march, the three to four hundred gays present were shouting "Gay rights now!" in unison. The hall rocked with the chant for many minutes before it gave way to an exuberant circle dance.

## As it is

On June 30, the final plenary session of the conference approved the structure and programme of the national coalition which had been adopted by the special NGRC session on the previous day. Dealing with a number of resolutions relating directly and indirectly to the gay struggle, the conference voted:

- to urge all gay organizations to take up the defence of John Darnley as 'one of the most important issues at the present time in the struggle for gay rights';
  - to send a message of support to Dr Henry Morgentaler, with copies to Jerome Choquette, Otto Lang, and Pierre Trudeau, commending the doctor's contributions to the struggle for women's rights, and calling for his release from prison;
  - to recognize 'the particularly difficult conditions in which the gay movement in Quebec will have to develop itself' and 'the necessity for gay organizations in Canada to sensitize Canadian gays to the political, economic and social conditions in Quebec, and to prepare them to support the struggle of gays in Quebec';
  - to stage simultaneous demonstrations across Canada in the fall around the anti-homosexual provisions of the Immigration Act.
- Most significantly, a resolution put forward by the religious caucus of the conference, which implicitly criticized the gay movement for failing to recognize that gay people are 'spiritual beings', went down to

## NGRC demands

1. We demand the inclusion of the term "sexual orientation" in the Canadian Bill of Rights and the strengthening of the Bill of Rights to effectively protect individual and minority rights.
2. We demand an end to discrimination against homosexuals in all branches of the federal government, including the Civil Service, Armed Forces and R.C.M.P., and that sexual orientation not be a criterion in determining security clearance. Moreover, we demand that all federal departments publicly adopt and implement policies prohibiting discrimination with respect to sexual orientation.
3. We demand measures which would prohibit the possibility of discrimination against any gay person or persons by reason of sexual orientation or marital status in public housing and the financing of such housing by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
4. We demand the implementation of Section 61 of the 1966 White Paper on Immigration which recommends the deletion of references to homosexuals ("homosexuals") from the Immigration Act.
5. We demand that Section 149 (Indecent

- Assault on Female), 155 (Buggery and Bestiality), 156 (Indecent Assault on Male), and 157 (Gross Indecency) be removed from the Criminal Code; and that coercion, clearly defined, be established as the sole criterion for punishable sexual offences.
6. We demand the abolition of all age of consent laws.
7. We demand that all references to homosexuality be removed from the Divorce Act.
8. We demand that homosexual parents not be denied custody of their children on the grounds of their sexual orientation; and furthermore that parents not be denied custody of their children on the grounds of homosexual unions.
9. We demand an end to the use of aversion therapy on homosexual prisoners in Federal Penitentiaries, and that the Solicitor-General repudiate the policy of "no aversion therapy -- no parole."
10. We demand that legislation which prescribes for indefinite confinement of "dangerous sexual offenders" be repealed; and that all cases of such indefinite confinement be immediately reviewed accordingly.

defeat. It was the only resolution to meet defeat in the final plenary.

The composition of the conference proved to be an accurate index of the state of the gay movement at the present time. The continuing failure of the movement to draw in significant numbers of lesbians was painfully evident; only about 20 women participated in the conference. This figure proportionally represents no increase from last year and has to be compared to the attendance of over two hundred women which a lesbian conference drew last January in Montreal. By voting for the establishment of a permanent Women's Caucus as part of NGRC the conference demonstrated an awareness of this problem and the inclusion in the NGRC programme of a demand for equal custody rights for gay parents was a first step towards dealing with the specific oppression of gay women. Nevertheless, the appreciation of lesbian oppression in the gay movement remains primitive, reflecting both the current underdeveloped state of lesbian politics and the sexist social environment from which the gay movement has sprung.

The conference also reflected the growing divisions of the gay movement, and indeed, advanced them. Despite frequently expressed regrets over the lack of gay unity evident in the conference and elsewhere, the emergence and collision of discrete currents of thought and action are the inevitable prelude to the development of an effective and coherent programme for gay liberation. To sacrifice this development in a compromise for the sake of illusory unity would be to re-



John Damien (centre) speaks to delegates at National Gay Rights Conference, flanked by Chris Bearchell, coordinator of the Committee to Defend John Damien, and Charlie Hill, President of Gays of Ottawa. (photo: Grant Kayler)

duce gay politics to the lowest common denominator. The growth of division must be welcomed as a sign that the gay movement is alive and well.

Five distinct groupings defined themselves in various ways in the course of the conference. These can be conveniently tagged as religious, service-oriented, rights-oriented, anarchist and leftist. The religious and leftist groupings established themselves through the formation of their respective caucuses. The civil rights orientation was embodied in the formal aspects of the conference, which dealt principally with the formation of NGRC and the ancillary civil rights matters. In reaction to the primary concern of the conference, the anarchist and service-oriented groupings formed; the former circulated a criticism of the conference and initiated its own workshop and street theatre, while the latter called for a conference on social services to be held later this year.

Despite the emergence of these five potentially conflicting currents, the civil rights grouping, which centred on Vancouver GATE, Winnipeg Gays for Equality, and Toronto GATE, easily dominated the formal conference proceedings. Of the other four groupings, only the leftist caucus attempted to pose a serious alternative to the civil rights perspective. The caucus, consisting principally of Revolutionary Marxist Group Gays and the Groupe Homosexuelle d'Action Politique de Montreal (GHAP), was unable to put forward an alternative perspective, however, because of its superficial acquaintance with the civil rights programme, and because of the lack of a socialist analysis of gay liberation at this time. Consequently, while the conference as a whole, under the leadership of the civil rights grouping, was breaking new ground by demanding the abolition of all age-of-consent laws and expressing solidarity with Dr. Morgentaler, the left caucus could only bring forth for endorsement a programme consisting of the least controversial demands already formulated by the gay movement. The only element of explicit left politics which actually penetrated the conference was a fragmentary reference to the capitalist origins of Quebec's economic and social problems contained in a motion put forward by an individual member of GHAP. Although this motion passed over the opposition of Vancouver GATE and Toronto GATE, a potentially instructive exchange between these organizations and the leftist caucus was precluded by the inability of the latter to put forward an alternative view of gay liberation. Consequently, at the conference, as in the gay movement generally, the civil rights grouping remained the only force both willing to articulate a coherent strategy for gay liberation and able to secure consistent majority support for its programme.

by Ken Popert

## Toronto Damien wins preliminary decision

An Ontario Supreme Court justice has granted John Damien's appeal for re-inclusion of major claims in his suit against the Ontario Racing Commission. Reversing an earlier court decision, Justice J. Lermer restored two important parts of Damien's claim, namely, that he has been fired solely for being a homosexual and that he was competent in his former position as a steward for the Racing Commission. The previous ruling had been made by Master S. M. McBride at the request of defence lawyers representing the Racing Commission and its chairman, Charles McLaughlin. The defence request had apparently been made in order to delay the preliminary court hearing and to weaken Damien's case.

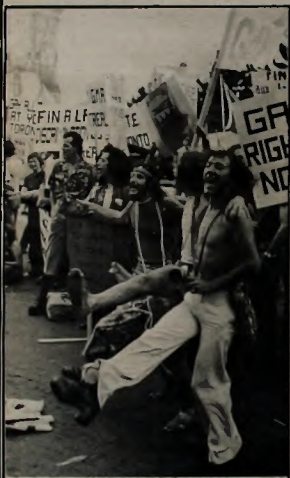
The decision constitutes an important gain for Canadian gays in dealing with the provincial human rights commissions because it sets a precedent in establishing discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation as a just cause for legal proceedings. Damien lawyer Harry Kopyto has prepared a brief for presentation to the Ontario Human Rights Commission in which he calls for the expansion of the interpretation of the word "sex" to include "sexual orientation". Kopyto will be joined by noted civil lawyer Paul Jewel in his presentation.

The next step in the legal proceeding will be the 'search for discovery', a process by which the court will determine whether there is enough evidence to proceed to trial. If, as expected, sufficient evidence is found to justify a trial, a preliminary hearing will be scheduled, probably for September. After the hearing, the suit will be heard in the Supreme Court of Ontario.

Meanwhile, the Damien campaign continues to gather support from both the gay and straight communities. So far the Committee to Defend John Damien has raised nearly \$2000 from all across the country. This only represents a fraction of the anticipated legal expenses, which may run as high as \$50,000. Fund raising efforts have included dances in Vancouver, Hamilton, and Toronto, and a banquet at David's Discotheque, in Toronto.

Damien's case will be one of the central themes of the Gay Rights March scheduled for Sept. 13, five days before the Ontario provincial election. The Damien campaign was elevated to a national level at the National Gay Rights Conference in Ottawa, where the conference urged all gay organizations to support the campaign by setting up local chapters of the Defence Committee.

by Robert Trow



second coming out

photo: Gerald Harmon

there i was  
with my brothers and sisters,  
for the first time  
declaring publicly  
my homosexuality

and we marched  
and we chanted  
and we shouted our demands

yielding defiance at the world

and they listened,  
and no one laughed,  
and no one threw stones

and they put it on the national news

and suddenly i felt we were winning

and i knew i'd never be the same again

david garnaisle



## Quebec City

Choquette kills  
gay rights  
amendment

On June 25th, Quebec Justice Minister Jerome Choquette and Liberal members of the National Assembly's Interim Justice Committee defeated an amendment to the Quebec Human Rights Code which would have protected gays against discrimination.

The amendment was proposed at the final meeting of the Justice Committee before the bill was presented for final reading in the National Assembly. Though Liberal members of the committee had previously displayed some support for the campaign to protect the rights of gay people, a meeting of the Liberal caucus of the National Assembly killed government support for the move.

Among the arguments enumerated by Choquette during the committee debate were: that Quebec society is not yet ready for inclusion of the amendment, that it is not within the bounds of a human rights act to confer a status of legitimacy on homosexuality and that the absence of the term 'sexual orientation' in the section listing the kinds of discrimination prohibited does not give the go-ahead to discrimination.

The Opposition, and particularly Robert Burns (PQ/Haïssineuve), pointed out to the Justice Minister that an impressive number of religious, social and other legal organizations, as well as unions, had supported the demands of the gay coalition fighting for the amendment. In addition, opposition leader Jacques-Yvan Morin (PQ/Sauvé) read aloud the contents of a dozen letters of support, but failed to convince the minister.

Burns, using the line of argument pre-

sented by Luc Dore, spokesperson for the gay coalition, made it clear that the amendment would not confer a status of legitimacy on homosexuality. That, according to him, had already been done by the federal Omnibus Bill of 1969. It was simply a question of acknowledging the basic human rights of gay people, such as rights to employment, housing, health services, etc and of recognizing the right to live without fear of discrimination as long as they did not engage in criminal acts. Those are the jurisdictional bounds of Quebec law.

Burns also disputed the arguments presented by the minister. Choquette had stated a few minutes earlier that the list of categories protected against discrimination was not comprehensive, but was intended to specify major groups. Burns asked the minister how he could claim that his refusal to include 'sexual orientation' in the list did not give the go-ahead to discrimination. He then cited the figures used by Dore, showing that 68% of Montreal gay people had already been victims of discrimination, the proportion rising to 86% in the case of more visible homosexuals. According to Burns, this discrimination is greater than that suffered by groups already protected.

At one point, under the pressure of these arguments, Choquette announced that even if he was the only person not in agreement with the amendment, that would not prevent him from being the only one who was right.

The principal objection which appeared to clearly influence the attitude of the Liberal Party was that of pederasty. The interventions of the MAs were clear on this subject. Their major preoccupation came down to a fear of being unable to prevent a pederast from occupying a position as a teacher or a camp counsellor. They feared 'condemning' the public morality. Even though the law has provisions which protect against such eventualities, both Burns (in the debate) and Dore (in a letter addressed to all the MAs) were unable to convince the government.

by Frank Brayton (from Gay Times)

## Calgary

Gay group sues  
for right  
to advertise

Gay people in Canada continue to discover that 'freedom of the press belongs to those who own one'; the most recent group to uncover evidence to this effect is the newly formed Gay Information and Resources of Calgary (GIRC).

GIRC, a social service group, wants to advertise its existence in order to reach as many local gays as possible. Their ad, which merely lists the name of the organization and its mailing address, was accepted by The Calgary Albertan with the comment 'if it's alright with Trudeau, it's alright with us', a reference presumably to Trudeau's sponsorship of the 1969 bill which, among other things, liberalized the laws regulating homosexuality.

It was a different matter, however, at The Calgary Herald, the city's evening newspaper. Armed with samples of the material GIRC wants to distribute, chairperson John Windi kept an appointment with the paper's advertising manager to discuss the ad. Before he could display any of the items, however, the paper's representative pulled two issues of The Body Politic from his desk. Pointing to an article in one of them, he said that it showed gay people want to destroy the family and added that, in his opinion, GIRC and Calgary gays were doing just that. For this reason, the ad was refused: 'The Herald is a family medium, and it's going to stay that way'.

Taking a path which is earning a reputation as the stations of the cross for gay organisations in Canada, GIRC sought the help of the Alberta Human Rights Commission and the Alberta Press Council. The Commission refused its help, pointing out that it

has no jurisdiction in the case, since it is not a violation of provincial rights legislation to discriminate against gays. Windi comments that 'the Commission has a nice smile, but very few teeth'. And to judge from the experience of gays with the rights commissions of other provinces, it's an affliction which runs in the family. GIRC does not expect any help from the Press Council either, since it is essentially a creature of The Herald.

GIRC has not given up, however. It has incorporated under the Alberta Societies Act and will attempt to place the ad again. If The Herald refuses this time, it may have a lawsuit on its hands.

by Ken Popert

## Vancouver

Out gay teacher  
fights administration

Michael Eliot-Hurst is Chairperson of the Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University. A socialist and highly respected educator, he is internationally known for his use of film in teaching.

Michael Eliot-Hurst is gay. And until June 1974, he was in the closet. Then he and his wife separated and he publicly came out to the Geography Department, joining the struggle for gay rights on the Simon Fraser campus.

His first challenge came after a short illness. He returned to the department to find that a number of the faculty had called for his dismissal as chairperson on the grounds of academic and pedagogical incompetence. At an inquiry before the dean, however, his accusers were incapable of proving incompetence of any kind. Instead, they revealed their true motives.

They were afraid that their chairperson was about to try to 'convert' his students, that he maintained an 'alien lifestyle', and that he might 'proselytize' at the upcoming Canadian Geographers Conference. They claimed as well that his marxist politics could no longer be tolerated.

Winning support from both students and the dean (who, however, advised him not to 'flout' himself), Hurst remained as chairperson. He continued to work in the gay movement until increasing pressures from the department forced his hospitalization for nervous exhaustion.

His opponents took the opportunity to attack again. The Dean in response to his continued gay/political work on campus re-



Michael Eliot-Hurst



used to terminate his medical leave and reinstate him to the department despite a letter from his doctor clearly stating he had recovered. Hurst then hired a lawyer to fight to regain his position as chairperson. The minister's secretary retaliated, threatening him with suspension unless he gave up the fight.

But Hurst is far from giving up. He will take his fight to the Board of Governors and the BC Human Rights Committee if necessary.

"As a gay person I have decided to fight with all my resources, the oppression which I face. This is important not only for myself and my own integrity but also for gay people in general, for the more that this oppression is confronted, the easier it becomes for other gay persons in similar situations to fight."

by Tim McCaskell

## Ottawa

### Phoney privacy law won't protect gays

When Justice Minister Otto Lang announced early in 1974 his intention to bring down legislation which would create a federal human rights commission, the general assumption of the gay movement was that he would pass up the opportunity to break new ground by including protections for gay people in the legislation. Lang's probable opinion on the question of human rights for homosexual Canadians was easily deducible from his consistent and forceful interjection of orthodox Catholic views into the administration of the nation's recently liberalized abortion laws, which, as part of the Criminal Code, fall under the jurisdiction of his ministry.

This general assumption was confirmed by an exchange of letters between Lang's office and the Toronto Gay Alliance Toward Equality during the first three months of 1974. So circumspcctly did Executive Assistant Stuart Cameron phrase Lang's exclusion of the matter of sexual orientation from consideration that he did not once use the phrase or refer directly to the group of persons concerned:

"As to the problems that your organization seeks to resolve, I must tell you that it is intended at this time to confine the functions of the commission to discrimination on the grounds of..."

Lang's plans were disrupted, however, first by the federal election of June 1974 and then by the public controversy surrounding his attempts to subvert by ministerial regulation the liberalization of the abortion laws enacted by Parliament in 1969. The proposed legislation was not heard of again until it was suddenly introduced in the Commons last June.

The substance of the bill, which received first reading on July 22, is of no immediate interest to gays. It forbids discrimination on the basis of the traditional categories: race, sex, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, age and marital status. The legislation applies only to businesses under federal jurisdiction -- banks, airlines, railways -- and affects the areas of employment, accommodation and advertising. The law will be administered by a federal human rights commission with the power to levy fines. At best, the legislation simply provides a target at the federal level for the gay civil rights campaign which is currently being waged at the provincial level.

However, attached to this piece of limited civil rights legislation is an apparently irrelevant excrescence dealing with the "protection of personal information". In essence, this part of the bill alleges to open up federal records to inspection by affected individuals. This ought to be of concern both to gay civil servants and to other gays, given the excessive preoccupation of the government and its agencies with the identification of homosexuals and

lesbians.

Since it is government policy that homosexuals should be excluded from the upper echelons of the civil service as security risks, it is reasonable to suppose that the government maintains records on known gays, both in the civil service and in the general population. That this is in fact the case is revealed in a story told by a former employee of the External Affairs Ministry.

According to this ex-civil servant, in 1961 then prime minister John Diefenbaker issued an order that all gays working in External Affairs be dismissed. The RCMP went to work, using such tactics as copying down the licence plate numbers of cars parked near known Ottawa cruising areas. It is also claimed that the federal agency contacted the United States FBI in order to profit from that agency's experience, in tracking down and exposing gay government employees during the McCarthy years. It is not clear that a ministry-wide purge was carried out, but it is virtually certain that the list still exists and may even be growing.

The protection of personal information legislation defines a record in part as "personal information recorded in any form about an individual's character, reputation, mode of living, or personal characteristics." Clearly, information on a person's sexual orientation falls within this definition. In theory, then, this law would allow any homosexual or lesbian to determine what information government agencies may have about his or her sex life. The very fact that such records could be proven to exist would be a powerful argument in favour of gay civil rights.

This possibility remains remote, however, in practice. First of all, the inquiring party can only check the accuracy of government-held information; there is no provision in the legislation for the removal of correct but improper information from records. Second, the list of exceptions to the working of the law is so long that only the most innocuous kinds of personal information will be open to inspection. Third, effective use of the legislation is precluded by the revocation of an ancient Liberal legislation trick: the terms defining the application of the protection of the personal information section are not set out in the statute itself, but are left instead to cabinet regulations.

The homosexual or lesbian who attempts to discover whether a government agency is keeping a record on his or her sex life will probably run up against a brick wall. Since homosexuality is by government policy a security risk, it is likely the government and its agencies (including the RCMP) would withhold relevant records using the grounds of "national security". For example, the Government will be allowed to refuse to reveal information where to do so would, in its judgement be "injurious to international relations, national defence or security or federal-provincial relations." In essence, then, the so-called protection of personal information legislation is nothing more than liberal window-dressing of the shabbiest sort. The commentators in the liberal press have recognized this fact. Toronto Star columnist Richard Gwyn summarised the proposed legislation in the words -- "The pattern is obvious: no ombudsman; unchallengeable discretion by ministers to exempt themselves; self-regulation by government of its own privacy rules; no freedom of information act. A fraudulent bill, in short, that protects the rights of the government and discriminates against the governed."

by Ken Popert

### Circumlocution of the month

Mr Thompson said he objected to "the number of folk letters who carry on activities with respect to human bodies in the nude..."

--Metro Toronto Parks Commissioner Thomas Thompson on the gay beach on Barton's Point, quoted in The Globe & Mail, August 8, 1976.

### Gay letter-writer tackles newspaper distortions

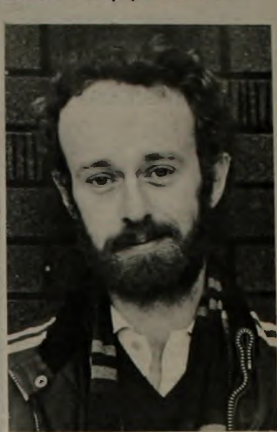


photo: Gerald Hannan

Toronto writer Michael Riddon has lodged a complaint with the Ontario Press Council against the Toronto Star, accusing the paper of publishing a letter to the editor written by Riddon with substantial alterations of the content.

The letter as originally written criticized the Star for its continuing prejudice against gay people. However, when the letter appeared in the paper's "Voice of the People" section on 28 February 1975, the criticisms of and references to the Star had been excised by the editors without any acknowledgment.

The case will be heard in Toronto on August 15.

### Marxist institute offers gay course

Marxist Perspectives on Gay Liberation will once again be offered among the courses at Toronto's New Marxist Institute during the winter semester.

The class is an attempt to apply a Marxist analysis to questions of gay liberation. Readings and discussion will develop from a grounding in the principles of Marxist analysis, through a survey of empirical data available, to an attempt at defining the material roots of gay oppression in class society. The history of the early homosexual rights movement, the debates on strategy and tactics today, and the importance of a radical sexual critique for the socialist movement will be reviewed.

The course is organized by and for gays. Everyone is welcome. Registration will take place at the New Marxist Institute Office, 200 Bedford Rd., Room 41 in the first week in October. For further information call 961-6672 or 921-3613.

### Quebec gets another gay paper

Hard on the heels of the anglophone monthly *Gay Times*, which began to publish last March, another new gay publication has appeared in Quebec. *Le Gai Quebec*, a bilingual monthly tabloid, brought out its first issue in Montreal at the end of June.

The paper is addressed to four groups--homosexuals, lesbians, S&M people, and bisexuals--and an editorial in the first issue describes the paper as "born of the rich of Quebec's gay community".

Individual issues sell for 50¢ and a year's subscription can be had for \$6.00 from *Le Gai Quebec*, CP 161, Pointe-aux-Trembles, Quebec.

## Toronto

## War on sin produces gay casualties

Observers in the gay community are concerned over the apparent increase in arrests and incidents of harassment by the Toronto police and morality squad.

The sudden increase in public harassment has been most dramatically noticeable at Hanlan's point on Toronto Island. A gay beach for at least 20 years, it has been ignored for that long by both the media, and, with the exception of the occasional check-up, by the police as well. At least 62 people have been arrested there recently for being nude in a public place. All but three of them were men. It is safe to assume they were gay men. Although this has been publicized, by the Globe and Mail in particular, as an attempt to make the beach safe for families, its actual effect has been to harass and disperse gays from one of the few public places that were comfortably theirs.

The crackdown has not been without its amusing side. The Body Politic was visited a second time by Sgt. Banford of the Metro Morality Squad. The sergeant threatened to charge the paper with distributing obscene material. He was prompted to do so by discovering a quantity of issue 19's which he concluded were intended for distribution. They were identical to the issue 19 which was actually distributed, save for the fact that a printer's error had rendered visible on the cover a scene of fellatio which was to have been covered by a jagged black line. The scene had been lifted from the Harold Lloyd comic strip used in the previous issue. In the issue actually distributed to news stands, the error had been corrected. The unsellable issue was being gradually surrendered to the garbage men.

Although this was explained to Sgt. Banford, he insisted on carrying off a bundle to headquarters for study. We were later informed that charges would not be laid, thus escaping what would undoubtedly have

been the first time in Canada that charges had been pressed against someone for the distribution of obscene garbage.

There has been an increase in the number of arrests for gross indecency. As well, officers have been making arrests in parks which have hitherto not attracted the attention of the police. There have been at least four arrests in Riverdale Park lately by officers of 55 Division. There is strong evidence to suggest that entrapment was used in at least two of the cases.

There have been arrests in Allan Gardens as well, though in this case the officers making the arrests were from the Morality Squad, and not from 51 Division, into whose area the park falls. One young man is facing the extraordinary charge of "soliciting to commit an act of gross indecency". He had been cruising a plain clothes officer for some time when he was asked, by the officer, what he liked to suck and fuck. He was then arrested and charged with the counselling crime noted above. Though it is not felt that a conviction can be secured by the crown on such a charge and in those circumstances, it is nonetheless a very effective harassment technique.

The collective has also received reports of entrapment in the washroom of the St. Charles' Tavern on Yonge St., and of at least one recent arrest along Philosophers' Walk behind the Edward Johnson Building at U of T.

Gay people are advised to proceed with extreme caution if they intend to cruise any of the Metro parks, or any public place. The battle against sin initiated by the Conservative government seems to have prompted the police and morality squad to step up their harassment of gay people.

by Gerald Hannon

## Ontario coalition plans rights march

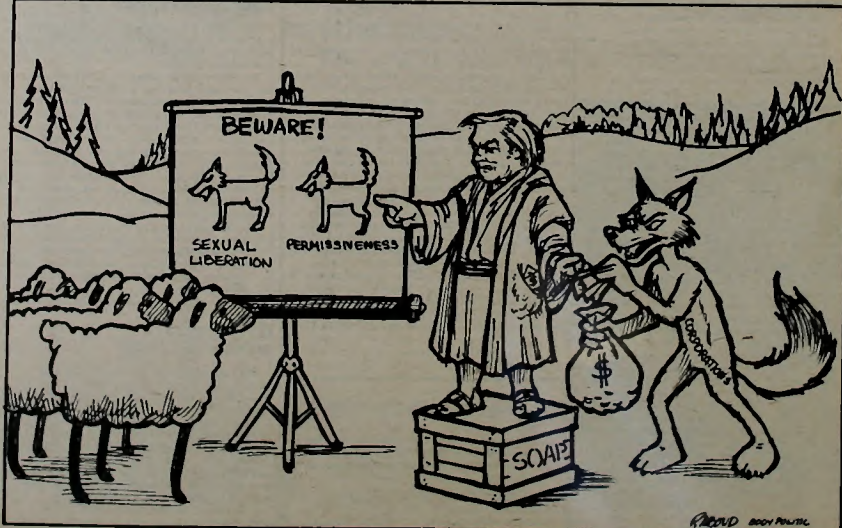
The Ontario provincial election, called for September 18, has provided a convenient focus for C.G.R.O. (Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario).

The steering committee of the province-wide coalition has been working on an up-

dated 10-page brief, entitled "The Homosexual Minority in Ontario", which is to be distributed by the regional groups to all current sitting members of the Legislature, and to newly elected members after the election. It contains the following demands:

1. The amendment of the Ontario Human Rights Code to include the term sexual orientation in order to assure the basic civil rights of homosexual men and women in all areas and especially in housing, employment and access to public services. Sexual orientation is defined as "including, but not limited to, heterosexuality, bisexuality, and homosexuality".
2. The inclusion of representatives of the gay community on the Human Rights Commission, and the amendment of the Human Rights Code to provide meaningful penalties for violators.
3. The Legislature and government of Ontario should lend encouragement to the Ontario Human Rights Commission to conduct research in the area of discrimination based upon sexual orientation, and to educate the public on the basis of this research.
4. Inclusion of an unbiased presentation of homosexuality in the sex education programs of Ontario with assurances that gay organizations will be consulted to provide information and speakers for such programs.
5. The enactment of guaranteed medical coverage for gay couples under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).
6. The amendment of regulations governing the Ontario Housing Corporation such that gay women and men will have the right to equal treatment in projects carried out by the OHC.
7. Introduction of a government regulation prohibiting discrimination against gays in the hiring and promotional practices of the Ontario Civil Service.
8. Amendment of all appropriate provincial legislation such that, in cases of child custody and adoption, homosexuality will not be a consideration for suitability.

"Toward Equality", a pamphlet containing a list of these demands and a covering letter from C.G.R.O., will be sent to each candidate in the election. Both the Toronto Gay Alliance Toward Equality and Gays of Ottawa plan all-candidates meetings in their



Shepherd Bill Davis diverts the flock.



respective cities. Other groups will attend meetings to determine candidates' positions on the issues.

The major public event planned is a Gay Rights' March to be held in Toronto on Saturday, Sept. 13 at 2 p.m. The March will have representatives from gay organizations across the province, including Toronto, Waterloo, Guelph, London, Ottawa, Windsor and Hamilton. The main themes of the march will be the defence of John Danien and inclusion of 'sexual orientation' in the O.H.S.C.

The march begins at Queen's Park and proceeds through the downtown area to Nathan Phillips' Square where speeches will be heard.

GATE-Toronto will also sponsor a dance later the same day, proceeds of which will go to the Committee to Defend John Danien.

For further information call GATE-Toronto, (416) 961-9359.

by Edward Jackson

## Winnipeg

### NDP gay caucus launched

In a precedent-setting move, a Gay Caucus was formed at this year's convention of the New Democratic Party held in Winnipeg. The convention—attended by over 1600 delegates—was held July 4-7 at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. The Gay Caucus decided to campaign for the election of a gay delegate to the running for the NDP Federal Council on a gay rights platform and to launch a campaign mobilizing support for gay rights resolutions in the NDP.

But while delegates debated policy, a struggle in defence of democratic rights was unfolding in the corridors. Several weeks before the convention began, Assistant NDP Federal Secretary Robin Sears arbitrarily rejected all the applications of organizations—including Gays for Equality (GFE) of Winnipeg—who had requested literature table space.

Last February GFE was refused literature table space at the Manitoba NDP Convention. However, when GFE threatened to picket the NDP headquarters, the restriction was dropped.

"The decision [of Sears] was rationalized," explained an Open Letter which was distributed to the convention, "by the argument that too many groups had applied (ten groups) and that the convention centre is not big enough to accommodate them. This convention centre is the biggest in Canada with room for hundreds of booths and displays." A campaign to reverse this undemocratic decision was initiated immediately by GFE and Vanguard Books. The Open Letter to New Democrats, signed by the authors and prominent individuals, went on to say that the decision "denies delegates and observers...the right to have available literature relevant to important struggles taking place in the gay and lesbian community relevant to the discussions that will occur in the convention".

Despite this protest, the Federal Council, meeting on the eve of the convention, decided to uphold the decision restricting literature sales. But the struggle didn't end there. The organizations defending a policy of open literature sales set up their literature tables anyway and attempted to put a motion on the floor of the convention reversing the decision. After a battle against the NDP leadership which included several eviction threats—at one point, four Winnipeg policemen arrived to try and take down the tables—the NDP leadership conceded. Literature and newspapers could be sold: a victory had been won.

In addition to spearheading the campaign against literature sales restrictions, GFE also distributed one thousand copies of a leaflet calling on the NDP to "take a formal position on the civil rights of homosexual citizens". The leaflet called on the NDP to demand the federal government "undertake a program consisting of research in

### Engineer comes out



That bastion of heterosexual jock values, the engineering profession, has been challenged by Trevor Mountford-Smith, gay engineer, who recently came out in the pages of Engineering, the national trade publication of the profession.

Mountford-Smith was responding to an article by regular columnist Connie Baillie in which she said she had never seen or heard of a gay engineer. He explained in his letter why gays are often unwilling to identify themselves, especially in such hostile contexts, and described the civil rights and educational work of Toronto GFE, of which he is a member. He called upon Ms. Baillie to help dispel misconceptions about gay people rather than perpetuate them.

Predictably, response from other engineers in later issues was not positive. One letter was a supercilious poem sprinkled with terms like 'mancy' and 'queer', another equated homosexuality with blindness and deafness, neither of which sad afflictions should be promoted. Mountford-Smith reported generally favourable reactions from co-workers.

the area of discrimination based on sexual orientation, and education of the public on the basis of this research...[and] to amend the Bill of Rights accordingly, and to ensure that all subsequent civil rights legislation be such that sexual orientation can no longer be a legal basis for discrimination."

The call for the formation of an NDP Gay Caucus was also issued in the leaflet. Harold Desmarais, Windsor Gay Unity chairperson and a delegate to the convention, entered the race for Federal Council on a gay rights platform. The Gay Caucus viewed the campaign as an excellent opportunity for popularizing gay liberation issues and drew its full support behind Desmarais' campaign. Although Desmarais was not elected, he was able in the course of the convention debate to speak in favour of a composite resolution on immigration calling for the removal of the racist and anti-gay Green Paper on Immigration. The resolution was subsequently referred to the resolutions committee for rewriting.

Despite the attempted literature sales restriction and the lack of discussion on gay rights resolutions, gay liberation did become an issue at this Federal NDP Convention. The success of the gay liberation intervention serves as an example for the entire gay movement as it attempts to win political parties to a gay rights perspective and build the newly established National Gay Rights Coalition from coast to coast.

by STUART RUSSELL

### Student paper publishes gay supplement

The Peak, the Simon Fraser University student newspaper, published a gay supplement in its July 9th issue. The four-page insert contained articles by gay students, faculty, and Vancouver gays covering many aspects of the gay struggle. The supplement was prepared by Gay People of SFU "in order to reach gay people and non-gay people as well on this campus". There are about 5,000 students on the SFU campus.

### New group formed in Calgary

A new gay organization has been formed in Calgary. Gay Information and Resources, a social services group, was born in June.

The group met at a humorous session, according to chairperson John Windi, when the Calgary post office refused to accept for mailing, a number of post cards intended to inform other gay groups of GIR's existence. The reason: a statement in the notice that "Calgary has finally gotten off its 'cowboy ass'" was termed abusive language by postal officials. In the end, however, national duty overrode local pride and the notices were allowed to pass through the mails unaltered.

The address of Gay Information and Resources is: #2 112A 8th Avenue SE, Calgary.

### National gay conference marks US bicentennial

The Gay Activists Alliance of Washington DC will host a Bicentennial Conference on Gays and the Federal Government on Columbus Day weekend (October 10-14) later this year. The conference will examine the ways in which the US federal government affects the lives of gay women and men in the United States.

In addition to panel sessions on particular aspects of relations between gays and the US government, there will also be a number of plenary sessions dedicated to broad perspectives on the gay movement today.

Further information is available from Bicentennial Conference, GAA/DC, Box 2554, Washington DC 20013.

### Ottawa gays prepare legal aid booklet, ask help

Gays of Ottawa (GO) has contracted with Self Counsel Press of Vancouver to prepare a booklet about the law for gays. Self Counsel Press publishes a series of booklets which disseminate legal information to the public for a reasonable price. The series is distributed throughout Canada.

The booklet will be a revision and expansion of GO's 1973 publication "Gays and the Law". Because it will deal with the application as well as the letter of the law, GO would like to hear from those across the country who may have information about case histories or judicial interpretations. Such people are asked to contact GO President Charlie Hill through Gays of Ottawa, Box 2919, Station D, Ottawa, Ontario.

### Gay studies at University of Toronto

The University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies is again offering a gay studies course this fall. Associate Professor John A. Lee of the Sociology Department will teach The Gay Experience: A Sociological Perspective. The course is described as "of special value to those in the 'helping professions'" and "of interest to concerned parents, teachers, and colleagues seeking insight into what has become an openly discussed and acknowledged alternative lifestyle".

Further information on the extension course can be had from the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies, 119 St George St, Toronto (928-2405).



## Argentina

## Lopez Rega's fall eases gay oppression

The progressive movement in Argentina, along with the Homosexual Liberation Front (FHL), celebrated a major victory last month with the fall of Jose Lopez Rega, Minister of Social Welfare.

Lopez Rega, the power behind the throne and chief advisor to President "Isabelita" Peron has been attempting to impose neo-fascist control on Argentina since the death of General Juan Peron last year. He was a confirmed spiritualist who claimed to receive direction from "the other world". Indications are that this other world may be the Washington headquarters of the US Central Intelligence Agency.

In the fight to prop up the shaky right-wing rule of Mrs Peron against the growing power of the progressive sectors of Peronism and the independent workers movement, Rega stooped to the most rabid level of pay-baiting to be seen in a long time. Last February, *El Caudillo*, the organ of Rega's Welfare Ministry published an article entitled "Acabar con los homosexuales" - "Finish off the homosexuals".

A few quotes will serve to indicate the tone of the article:

"As children they played with dolls. As they got older, violent sports horrified them. As was to be expected, time passed and they got the habit of turning on the radio to listen to greasy foreigners and became conscientious objectors."

"As this decadence grew amongst us and the numbers of the boys in pink increased, they began to feel themselves 'isolated', 'angushed', 'degraded' and 'on the fringe', then they created a club or front."

"Their symbol is FHL."

"The women who run against the stream have their own little games. A while ago they put out a magazine; half bull, half Marxism."

"Marxism has utilized and utilizes homosexuality as an instrument for its penetration and as an ally in its objective."

"The enemy wants a defeated country. As for the ones who are already amongst, we propose that they be locked up in camps for re-education and work, so that two needs can be satisfied—the need to keep them away from society and the need to compensate the Nation for the loss of a useful man."

"We have to get rid of the homosexuals. We ought to form Vigilante Squads who will go out and comb the streets and catch these creatures dressed as women. Cut off their hair or shave them and tie them to trees with explanatory notes attached."

"We have to get rid of the homosexuals. Lock them up or kill them. Yes, we know, you're going to tell us we're exaggerating. So we say, go to the police station and when a family man whose son has just been 'touched' or 'interfered with' or 'enticed' comes out, ask him what he would do if he had the chance."

Argentine society has traditionally been super macho and anti-gay. The fact that such material could be published in a semi-official government publication is an indication of the difficulty that FHL faces in its struggle.

At the same time Lopez Rega was encouraging Argentinian straights to murder gays, he was attempting to smash the organized labour movement. His strategy was to label the labour movement as Marxist, equate Marxism to homosexuality, and then to whip up anti-homosexual hysteria. Rega has also been accused of organizing the Argentinian Anti-Communist Alliance. The AAA has brutally murdered thousands of Argentinian leftists in the past year. It is not known whether members of the Homosexual Liberation Front were singled out as targets.

Rega's fate was finally sealed when Argentine workers organized a general strike to protest his pro-business economic policies. His fall means that the work of the

## Miss Mundo



Isabelita MARTINEZ DE PERON, presidente de la Argentina, mantiene a todo precio el nivel de vida y el nivel de bienestar de la Argentina. (Basta que el presidente de la Argentina sea un hombre inteligente)

"I'm nervous, Lopez Rega; this thing is shaking too much."  
"Everything is shaky these days, honey."

(From *Inpreco*)

gay movement in Argentina will be somewhat easy; however, there is a great deal to be done. The fact that the FHL has allied with the union movement does not negate the great anti-gay prejudice which still exists among the Argentine people.

by Tim McCaskill

## United States

## 10,000 gays march to mark rebellion

June 21-29 was Gay Pride Week, a commemoration of the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion when a four-night-long pitched battle took place between New York City policemen and the gay community. The effects of the rebellion were widespread, emboldened by the courageous resistance of their brothers and sisters, gay people came out all across the country, proud and unafraid, to demand an end to centuries of gay oppression. The gay liberation movement was born.

On June 29, ten thousand people marched in the New York City Gay Pride March, from Sheridan Square to Central Park. A wide range of groups was represented: the Gay Activists Alliance, gay religious groups, Parents of Gays, and gay people from Buffalo, Boston, Rochester, Virginia and other cities and states.

Prominent in the march was the large contingent from the Gay Caucus of Youth Against War and Fascism, whose banners and chants lent a militant spirit to the march. "Stone-wall means fight back: smash gay oppression", "Free Joan Little, free Susan Saxe, free all political prisoners", and "The victory in Vietnam is our victory too" were some of the slogans which linked the struggle of gays to those of other oppressed people.

At a demonstration in Boston the previous Saturday, June 21, two thousand people had marched from Copley Square to Boston Commons, where a rally with speakers and music was held. Current issues of relevance to the gay community in Boston were raised:

the attacks on gay bars, discriminatory legislation, the threatened welfare cutbacks, and denial of the rights of gays to jobs.

Also raised was the case of Susan Saxe, a lesbian sister whose trial for bank robbery was scheduled to begin the following Monday. The Gay Caucus of Youth Against War and Fascism of Boston raised a call for active support of Susan Saxe, and about fifty people joined in a picket line which took place that day. In addition, YAWF made the vital connection between racism and sexism with their banners "Fight back! Smash gay oppression!" and "Stop the war against Black America!" and "Gay, straight, Black, white: same struggle, same fight!"

It is in the spirit of this chant that gay people need to orient themselves towards the coming period. Yet ago, before there was a gay movement, gay people were among the foremost supporters of and strugglers for the rights of Black and other Third World people. They were among the leaders of the anti-war and women's movements. But despite their hard work in these arenas, and the respect they earned for their courage, they knew that if they revealed to the very people with whom they struggled that they were gay, they risked the loss of the friendship and respect they had earned.

The gay liberation movement was necessary both in order to give gay people pride in themselves and to familiarize straight people with the truth that gay people are much more like themselves than bourgeois propaganda had led them to believe.

These tasks are not completed; nor can they be. Yet. A far greater crisis faces all working people, and gays, along with other oppressed, are being especially hard hit. The capitalist system is crumbling and the bourgeoisie, its insatiable need for power and wealth sharpened by panic, would have all workers and oppressed at each other's throats in order to obscure the truth about the source of our common oppression. Gays must not separate themselves from other struggles at this time.

Gay people played a significant role in the December 14 National Mobilization Against Racism, and continue to lead in the ongoing, crucial struggle against racism in Boston. This is an example of the kind of struggle which must be waged. The current mobilization around the case of Joan Little, a victim of the racist, sexist prison system is another cause which every gay person should support. Gay people, while never retreating from their own rightful demands for human respect, must join with the other working and oppressed people in the struggles against the class enemy which lie ahead.

by Connie Harris (from *Workers World*)

## Who could they possibly mean?

Advertising in this category must be submitted in writing. Re-orders of previously run ads will be accepted by telephone.

The word "Homosexual" is to be spelled out in full. The word "gay" is not acceptable except as it may appear in the name of an organization; similarly, the word "straight" is not acceptable.

Public events, such as a dance or open forum to discuss homosexuality, are acceptable.

Advertising on behalf of homosexual organizations where the purpose of the advertising is to recruit or convert, for example, promoting circulation subscriptions to periodicals which they may publish, is not acceptable.

From the latest edition of Toronto Star Standards of Advertising Acceptability





# The family— 'Don't shut us out of your life'

by Merv Walker

Revealing our gayness would not be a difficult matter if we did not dread the reaction. In encouraging people to come out it is a mistake to believe that reaction or to say that it does not exist or is not very common. We must be prepared for the worst.

In the last issue of *The Body Politic* we published a letter in which a gay man came out with his parents. In this issue we present the negative response of another man's parents and the exchange which led to a better understanding.

My coming out letter, which is not included here, was sent to my parents, an elder married estate (Marie) and was read by an elder married brother (Stewart). The individual responses of my mother and father were very similar and have been combined here into one letter. My sister's response was much more positive. Although only a small part of it is included here, it was extremely important in helping me to overcome the depression created by my parents' unexpected reaction. I would wholeheartedly agree with the oft-stated advice to tell brothers and sisters first.

## Disbelief

We were indeed shocked and surprised and cried and prayed to God for help and guidance in this matter. We had no idea that you were having trouble this way. We feel that we have failed in some way, not enough love, security or guidance. However, whatever the reason, we want to help you out of it.

How could you ever think we would reject you? If you had been born with one arm we would have loved you. This in no way changes our love for you. That we didn't mention homosexuality in your lifetime was due to ignorance on our part. I never realized that it could have a place in our family and should be discussed with you kids.

Yes, I knew you were unhappy at home, but I thought it was just growing up. Merle was dissatisfied at home around that age and so was Stewart but now that they have homes of their own they've changed. We all go through that stage. My heart is breaking to think of the gap between me and my children. All I ever wanted was to be a good Mother but somehow I've failed.

Your letter stated that you thought you were different in Grade 11, which would make you 15. You probably had wet dreams, which is natural for boys in their teens and unmarried men. Or you may have relieved yourself by hand. Again, many do this, even old bachelors relieve themselves by the hand car method. This does not say



that there is anything wrong with you or that you were a homo.

Mervin, I cannot believe that you went into this voluntarily the first time. You were no doubt invited to a room with some more boys, they gave you a few drinks and got you half under the weather, then they invited you to stay over night and go to school from their place the next day. Then one or two worked you over. They probably threatened you with your life if you dared to report them. Then of course you would feel guilty and unable to get out of it.

I never had experiences with homos myself but in the navy, several times, some of the teenage sailors went ashore and came back swearing because some homo had propositioned them. They usually slugged them and

took off back to the ship. Arnold was hitch-hiking when he was 16. He met up with some guy who offered him a bed for the night. The guy tried to work Arnold over when he got him in bed. Arnold fought him off and hit him over the head with a chair, then beat it. These homos will approach and attack anybody whether they are homos or not, just as another man may seduce a girl.

We went to see a psychiatrist. He said that you yourself had to make up your mind to get out of it. We believe with all our hearts that you have too much intelligence and ambition to resign yourself to a life of that. First you must get away from this newspaper [The Body Politic] and nest of homos and live with other people.

There are many Pentecostal churches



ches that preach salvation and practice it strongly. If you can get involved with one of these churches, they will surely help you to think that sex out of marriage is wrong and that sex in marriage is right. The Bible says "he who thinks of adultery is guilty of adultery". In other words, with the help of God, get sex out of your mind. I will pay your way with my Bible school that you want to attend. Being in complete contact with God for seven days a week would surely help you to change and to marry and lead a normal life.

Looking at this from the other angle, if there is no cure for this ailment and you have to be this way for the rest of your life, there seems to be no reason why you can't finish your university and take a job. There is no reason why you should tell people your personal feelings. The psychiatrist said that there were many professors, doctors and others who were that way and yet got along OK.

P was the town clerk for many years, he was a good clerk, and didn't bother other people, so other people treated him alright. G was supposed to be that way, yet he ran a successful business and took part in many town functions. There are many men around town, who are fifty or more and have never married. They always seem to be in the company of men and drink beer and curl. Whether they are homos or not would be hard to say, but in any case, they have not married and seem to have reasonably happy lives.

There are some questions I'd like to ask. Do you think you were born this way, is it a genetic imbalance? Were you led into it by being a rather shy and reserved person? Was it lack of communication between us as parents, or the lack of parental guidance in telling you the facts of life at the age of puberty? We still have 3 youngsters to raise.

My heart is so full and so very heavy. I want only to understand and help you and to be allowed to continue to love you. Your home is still here, and we are the same parents you've always known. Don't shut us out of your life. That would be more than we could stand.

## Anger

I get the impression from your letters that you have been told, or have imagined, that the big city is filled with evil people. Among these are a number of furtive little ogres called "homos", who dart about dragging young innocents off the streets and threatening them with their lives.

Neatly you separate those "homos" from yourselves and from me by telling me about all of the things they do. Well, I am a homosexual, now it's up to you -- you can identify me with those "homos" you've described (do you think I fit the description?) or you can realize that there is no such thing. Homosexuals are people, just like you, and just like your son.

At any rate, one thing had better be perfectly clear; I will not put

up with the word "homo". If it is used again you will simply not hear from me until I receive an apology. Only two words; homosexual, and Gay are acceptable to me.

I was angry when I received your letters. I trusted that you would read my letter and take what I said as the truth about myself. But at times, reading yours, I found it difficult to believe that you had even read mine past the word "homosexual". Everywhere you misconstrued, reading what you wanted to read rather than what was written. I've tried to go through your letters and explain to you all of the things you have said which have no basis in fact or in common sense.

You taught me that religion is a matter of personal choice, and that I should respect peoples' right to choose. I have made it clear before that I have no feelings for religion, and no desire to get involved in it. So would it be so much to ask that you show a little of that respect you used to preach?

You seem to think that because I am attracted to men instead of to women, that I think about sex 24 hours a day. Therefore, I should 'get sex out of my mind'. If you will stop and think about it for a moment you will realise that there is no logic or common sense in that statement whatever.

I cannot stress enough that I am not sick or ailing (and I am still in possession of both of my arms thank you). Yes, I am different. I have more education and come from a larger family than most people. I also come from a farm, wear glasses, read a great deal, and have a boyfriend. Why should that last one have such effect? It's just another of the ways in which I differ from other people. It is not more positive nor more negative in value than any of the others.

Psychiatrists try to 'cure' people of being different. One of the methods they use is called shock "therapy". It has very accurately been called a kind of torture, for it is extremely inhumane. The suicide rate among people who try to change their sexuality in this (or any other) way is very high. Difference does not equal ailment.

It is interesting that you mention a number of gay people in town. I was going to mention them to you and ask if they too were those sick "homos" you told me about. G, for example, did more for the town than many other people you could mention. Surely you wouldn't think of him as sick. Likely you wouldn't think of him as anything but just G.

It would be difficult for Stewart to hide from you the fact that he's married. He would have to avoid talking about the one he loves, and about 80% of his activities because they take place with her.

It was precisely the same for me. My actual sex life is none of your business, but trying to hide it really cut down on what I would say to you.

You seemed to think that I was worried lest you reject me. I don't think that I implied this anywhere,

because I did not believe it could happen. In fact, I was prepared for a much more positive, rational response from you than I got, particularly after Merle wrote and said:

I'm glad you were able to bring it out and tell the family. I'm sure you are finally at peace with yourself without pretending to always be someone you weren't and couldn't possibly be. I'm proud of you for having the guts to stand up for yourself, which is something few of us have. Your being gay doesn't change our feelings for you. It is just another part of your personality which makes you an individual.

Merle apparently recognized something that you have not; I have been gay for a long while. I haven't suddenly changed, only your knowledge of me has. I am not going through any kind of a crisis, but perhaps you are.

Because I haven't changed, it seems strange to me that you would suddenly blame my unhappiness at home on being gay. It was related, just as Merle's and Stewart's desire for a sexual outlet was related to their unhappiness at that age.

What is this nonsense about being a good mother? Suddenly you find that your son is not doing precisely what you'd expected -- is this reason to call your whole life into question? Did you doubt your value as a mother when Stew quit school? When Merle went to business college instead of university? We are people too, not machines that you program to do certain things. How do you suppose your parents felt when you left home at the tender age of 15 and married a man 13 years your elder?

Most people go through life doing all the 'right' things, never questioning whether or not the 'right' things will make them happy. Don't you think it better that I choose my own course, with the guidance of the values and the traits you have given me, than to go through life numbly acting out the roles that everyone else acts out? Roles that I would have to crush my emotions and squelch my intelligence to live with.

I will not answer your last question at this time, because I hope to make you see that there is no possible way to answer it. Why one indelible way to answer it.

Continued on page 27





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9. **From With Downcast Gays, Aspects of Homosexual Self-Expression** by Andrew Hodges and David Butler  
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## INSIDE OUT

## The 'shameful' secret

Gay oppression is ubiquitous, multi-sided and often difficult to describe. And yet, if we don't know how and why we are oppressed, there's not much point in talking about liberation.

Inside Out is a column of basic observations which are essential to self-understanding -- and therefore self-liberation.

The phrase "coming out", as used by gay people, has three meanings: to acknowledge one's homosexuality to oneself; to reveal oneself as homosexual to other gay people; and lastly, to declare one's homosexuality to everyone and anyone...

Homosexuals are unlike any other oppressed group in that their identity is almost always invisible to others. They can even conceal their homosexuality from themselves, for such is the disgust attached to the word 'homosexual' that many people who have need of homosexual experience never acknowledge it, and sometimes those who quite frequently seek out such experience manage to convince themselves that they are not really "one of them."

To state explicitly that one is homosexual goes against a lifetime's conditioning. The shame we have been taught to feel is deep and real. The words "I am homosexual" stick in the throat. But coming out is essential. While the majority of gay people continue to hide their 'shameful' secret, the achievements of the gay movement are bound to remain insubstantial. Lobbying the political, medical or educational world will ultimately serve to reinforce their view of homosexuality as being something remote from everyday reality, and gays as being other people somewhere else, if homosexuals within those worlds do not play their part. Nor would it be possible to give a distorted picture of gays if people could simply see us in all our variety. While most gays hide their identity, the greater will be the problems of those who have come out, were misled out, or by virtue of their evident homosexual traits were always out. How often do discreet homosexuals stand by while their more obvious brothers and sisters are made the butt of heterosexual mockery.

All that we have said reflects the idea of the formation of a sense of community. Coming out is even more meaningful now that the existence of the gay movement allows us to think in terms of coming out together. Ripples of self-disclosure reinforce each other within a wave of social change. A community can only exist when we identify with each other's needs. So often identification is purely negative; gays cannot ally with those who reflect what they hate in themselves; fearing to come out they are unwilling to unite with those who have the power to expose them. Once one does regard other gay people as part of a genuine community demanding support, coming out becomes a meaningful way of giving that support.

By coming out with people they already know, gay people can demonstrate that homosexuals are real people whose lives cannot be trampled on. "We are the people you warned us against" captures the effect. If they can discuss their feelings and lovers when heterosexuals discuss theirs, this will have far more effect than any amount of propaganda about the 'validity' of homosexual relationships. By coming out indiscriminately (by wearing a badge, for instance), gays oblige everyone to see that there are people who feel no shame in being known as homosexual. 'Gay Pride' is the concept formed in opposition to the shame that all gay people are conditioned to feel, a shame that society demands as the condition for its limited tolerance; to deny this shame is to demand unconditional acceptance. It is pointless to limit coming out to "those who will understand"; only by public, indiscriminate, indiscreet self-disclosure can this shame be denied.

From *With Downcast Gays, Aspects of Homosexual Self-Expression* by Andrew Hodges and David Butler. London, 1974. Available from Glad Day Books, 139 Seaton St., Toronto, Ontario.



# Why I want a lover

by Alan Belkin

I want a lover. Why? I have things others lack -- I work in a profession I love (I am a musician), I have good friends I treasure, am in good health -- and yet I feel I am missing something. This something is not just sex, but 'love'. Someone I can share with on an everyday basis, sexually and emotionally -- this is what I want.

When I first came out (about 16 months ago), I was much less sure of what I wanted. I read the usual gay liberation literature, went to a couple of consciousness-raising groups, heard liberationists of various persuasions speak on gay life and love, and found myself confused and not much happier than I had been. I had expected coming out to be the answer. After all, it had taken me from the time I was 13 to the time I was 22. Surely after I had taken this difficult step, the world would take notice and give me something in return for my efforts. And it did -- a new set of questions and longings mixed in with the old.

To be sure, the guilt about my homosexuality was no longer there. I was proud to be gay, and finally I could express gay feelings in talking to people without the air of confessing a sin. Also, for the first time I had gay friends, and I learned to be comfortable in the presence of all the non-straight kinds of gay people: the queens, transvestites, etc. I also no longer felt the internal pressure to force myself on any gay person I met in the fear that I would not meet another one for years. I became generally more relaxed.

As I came into contact with gay literature, I encountered the 'fuck everything in sight' philosophy, the view that sex had to be 'meaningful' to be meaningful, that 'marriage' was the only alternative, that the answer lay in 'multiple relationships', and so on. As for myself, I was unsure. A lot of men excited me sexually, and I was meeting more gay people than ever before. Part of me wanted emotional reassurance through sex, and the other part for the first time faced the possibility that maybe I just wanted a lot of sex to make up for all that lost time. The infrequent actual sexual experiences I did have confused me even more. Either through bad luck or some kind of unconscious selection on my part, they were mostly poor, in the sense that most of the men I was with were not giving in any way (as a matter of fact, one or two were downright cruel), and of course this left me more unsure of myself than ever. Also, I had learned even prior to coming out that one was not supposed to get too 'heavy' too soon or express too much emotion, or else exit stage right. This I found very hard. All in all, I was finding that

given my own emotional vulnerability, having sex with someone I didn't know and wasn't sure I liked in any but a physical way could be an invitation to disaster. But with none of my gay male friends was there a mutual sexual attraction. I tried having sex with one who was attracted to me, but to whom I was not attracted, and although the experience was meaningful and valuable, sexually I was not really satisfied.

At about this time, I became close, in a professional capacity, to a monk, and learned from his example that celibacy, though I did not desire it, could be a viable alternative in some circumstances. But although I could exist moderately happily by myself, with only the odd pang of sexual loneliness, I was still very envious of other people in couples, and even to an extent of all my friends, who were having lots of casual sex. This envy, and an admittedly rather superstitious feeling that I was 'jinxed' (ten years of yearning without satisfaction do not leave one confident about the future), were the main causes of the unhappiness I felt. Friends tried to reassure me, and I often felt better for a while. But my general feeling was a sense of hopelessness in ever finding what I longed for.

Recently, I have realized that casual sex is definitely not what I want, and that at this time, it is difficult for me to separate my emotional needs for give and take from my sexual needs. Also, that what I really want is not so much a body beside me, no matter how sexually attractive, but rather a being with whom I can communicate in head and heart, as well as physically. Because of this realization, my envy of casual encounters has waned considerably.

And this is how I feel now. People tell me that I would not be so anxious for a lover if I knew the kinds of problems such a relationship brings. To which I reply that yes, perhaps I am idealizing somewhat, but basically I know that people aren't plastic, and that where there are human beings there are problems, and, all the same, I think it can be worth it in the long run if there is honesty on both sides. People tell me that the desire for a lover is a neurotic need going back to my childhood, to which I reply that I have as much desire to give as to take, and this is not neurosis but life. People tell me that what I am looking for is hard to find, and that perhaps I will never find it, and to this I have no reply. This is almost a question of faith, and this does not come easily, especially after years of negative conditioning and lack of satisfaction, and after the bad experiences I have had this past year.

A few weeks ago, I was talking to a straight male who, on hearing that I was not interested in casual sex but

rather was looking for a more serious relationship, said, "But that's so hard to find, it's so rare among gay men". This remark, although a stereotypical generalization by a straight person, left me depressed for quite a while. Why? Probably because I have to some extent found it to be true; and this is very hard to accept.

Which brings me to why I have written this article. Perhaps this is almost an act of faith for me as well as a request for faith. I am writing this in the hope that it will perhaps encourage a few others who feel the same way I do, and that they will perhaps encourage me. It seems to me that above all I need faith in gay people and gay life, and this is difficult in the light of gay experience. But what have we in gay liberation to offer each other except hope?

March, 1975

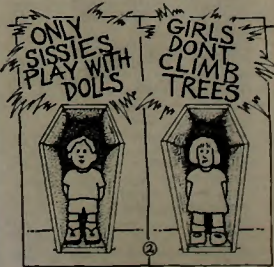
## Comment—

Alan Belkin seems to be working through a conflict between emotion and ideology which has become fairly common among gay people. Certainly my lover and I have felt the contradictions. But gay liberation thought is not static. It must grow and change with new information and new knowledge deriving from our experience.

One of the discoveries from which gay liberation drew its strength, and continues to draw its strength, is that heterosexual institutions are not necessarily valid for the future. We rejected the restrictive monogamous relationship for gay people because it was seen as a cheap and oppressive imitation.

But how can we reconcile this with the emotional aspects of our lives? People still want lovers. Alan has found no emotional gratification in his experiences outside of a relationship. I feel that I have derived a great deal of personal strength and positive reinforcement for my gay life style in a lover relationship. Why are we so eager to have, and how can we find valuable, something which is presumably oppressive

Continued on page 18



# Susan Saxe:

## "Feminism is not collaboration"

### The background

Susan Saxe may be sentenced to life imprisonment in Boston early this fall. She already has ten years behind bars for a lesbian feminist and gay liberation. Saxe, for example, has been headlined the "revolutionary lesbian cop-killer".

Now the F.B.I., in their efforts to find informers and garner information, cannot legally make anyone answer questions. Those approached have the constitutional right to re-

ground. The media has helped to exploit this fear and hostility, in the process discrediting both lesbian feminism and gay liberation. Saxe, for example, has been headlined the "revolutionary lesbian cop-killer".

Now the F.B.I., in their efforts to find informers and garner information, cannot legally make anyone answer questions. Those approached have the constitutional right to re-



**"I intend to fight on in every way as a lesbian, a feminist, an Amazon."**

fuse to give any answer that might incriminate them. To circumvent this restriction on their power, the F.B.I. has been working in cooperation with the U.S. Attorney's office. Suspects are issued with subpoenas to appear before a Grand Jury, where they are not allowed a lawyer because it is not a trial, and their constitutional safeguards are stripped from them. The judge invokes the 'use' immunity clause whereby witnesses cannot remain silent. Although evidence they give cannot be used against them, it can and is used to incriminate anyone else mentioned. To refuse to testify is to be in contempt and liable to a jail sentence. The choice then is to possibly incriminate others or to go to jail. Many innocent people placed in this position have been radicalized by the experience.

Saxe and Powers were thought to have lived for a period of time in Lexington, Kentucky under the pseudonyms of Lena Paley and May Kelley. The F.B.I. descended on Lexington. In March of this year six people refused to cooperate with the questioning. Held in contempt by the

Grand Jury, these five lesbians and one gay man were separated and thrown in prison. At a statement read at the Grand Jury, the Lexington Six, as they became known, explained that, although they did not know Susan Saxe and Kathy Powers and therefore had no information to divulge, they had refused to talk as a protest against the mis-use of the Grand Jury system. They saw it becoming a "broad-based tool of oppression against political radicals".

Three lesbians in New Haven, Conn. were similarly treated and were jailed for the same reasons. Eventually in Lexington, however, all but Jill Raymont agreed to testify, not because they now wished to cooperate, but because they could not withstand the treatment they had received in prison. Junkin, for example, reported being beaten, thrown into solitary confinement, and tear-gassed by the guards.

Susan Saxe was apprehended in Philadelphia on March 27 while walking hand-in-hand with her lover Byrna Aronson, a prominent member of the Philadelphia lesbian feminist community. Byrna and many others in the feminist and gay communities who did not know her rallied around Susan, initiated a defense fund and worked to educate the community about the tactics of the F.B.I. and how to deal with them.

On June 9, Susan Saxe and her lawyers reached a Plea Agreement with the government. She pleaded guilty to all federal charges outstanding against her at the time of her arrest, including robbing a Philadelphia bank and the theft of classified war-related documents from a National Guard Armory. As a letter from the Saxe Defense Fund states: "The provision that Susan Saxe will never be immunized before any Grand Jury to testify about events between 1969 and 1975, and that she will never be asked to testify against Kathy Powers are the heart of the agreement between Susan and the government."

Susan was then taken to Boston to face trial for bank robbery. On June 23 she pleaded innocent to a charge of first degree murder and 2 charges of armed robbery. The trial will probably resume in early September.

The reading of Susan Saxe's statement was considered a moment of victory by the activists present in the courtroom. "It was the first cry of joy and defiance in the tedious weeks of pre-trial work", they wrote.

Susan Saxe has shown a quality of resistance that exhilarates and inspires. The lesson is unmistakable: all gay people committed to the struggle for social change would do well to acquaint ourselves with the

Although much of the recent media coverage has centered around Susan Saxe, her capture by the F.B.I. was the culmination of a complex series of events. For the last year the lesbian communities throughout the U.S. have been the objects of intensive F.B.I. harassment. Agents have been questioning and intimidating gay women and men whom they suspect might know something about several underground fugitives they have been searching for. Susan Saxe and Kathy Powers were two of those fugitives, and they were known to be gay. Both were involved in the anti-war movement in 1970, and they became members of the radical Weather underground, which believed that the imperialistic tyranny of the United States, so well revealed in Vietnam, could only be overthrown by armed struggle.

In 1970 the two women allegedly took part in the armed robbery of a Boston bank; a guard was killed in the attempt. Those implicated went underground and had managed to elude capture for 4 years. Saxe and Powers moved from city to city, assuming various aliases, and living and working quietly in the lesbian feminist communities in each.

Jane Alpert, another F.B.I. fugitive, a lesbian and former Weather member involved in anti-war activities in 1970, surrendered to the authorities in December 1974 after 4 years underground. Although seen by some as an informer and traitor, Alpert explained her move as a step toward being able to write about and act more freely upon her feminist ideas. She is currently serving a 27-month prison term.

These and other incidents led to the F.B.I.'s belief in a vast lesbian underground, which was in turn linked to the radical left under-



various methods by which the authorities in our areas or our countries can control or crush our activities. The Canadian political and legal systems differs in many details from the American; its resistance to any real change does not. We cannot dismiss Susan Saxe simply because we may have difficulties reconciling ourselves to bank robbery as an acceptable radical tactic. Any kind of activism, particularly in a period of economic uncertainty, may come to be viewed as dangerous. Two years ago few could have conceived of a subversive lesbian underground, even as a joke. But it has been conjured up, and it and other manufactured threats will continue to be used when convenient, to the detriment of all. A stubborn naïveté that we are safely remote from such reprisals is the truly dangerous attitude.

Money is urgently needed for Susan's continued defence in Boston. Cheques may be addressed to:  
SUSAN SAXE DEFENCE FUND  
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## The statement

The most significant point of this plea agreement is that the United States government realises that I am not and never will be a collaborator. I have made it clear to them that if I am called as a witness in any government proceeding, I will refuse to testify. The government has agreed that I will not be held in contempt for this refusal. In return, I have agreed to enter a guilty plea and receive a ten-year and a two-year sentence. The length of the sentences is a direct result of my refusal to talk.

Today I am in effect pleading guilty in federal court to charges stemming from a period five years ago when I believed, as I still do, that armed struggle against the American State was a valid and necessary escalation of the politics of the '60's. I understood at the time that the American Government was the most dangerous, powerful, organized, violent opponent of people's liberation around the world. I also felt at that time that the liberation of women, to which I was already deeply and personally committed, could best be achieved by our full participation in and leadership of what I then perceived as a worldwide cultural revolution led by the Third World and aimed against the Yankee Empire.

Over the course of the last five years, four and a half of which have been lived underground in America, I, like many other women who came to politics through socialist, anti-racist, and anti-imperialist causes, have changed, have grown, have emerged a feminist. Like these thousands of other sisters, I am no longer content to be just one strong woman fighting for a revolution which, though it is just and necessary, does not speak to my own highest aspirations, my own most perso-

nal and immediate needs. Over the past five years, then, I have emerged as a feminist, a lesbian, a woman-identified woman. This was not a 'conversion', but a development, a natural process that followed my previous commitment as day follows night.

There have been many women throughout herstory who have taken great risks, put great faith and energy into movements that spoke to our liberation as workers, as poor people, as members of every oppressed race and class, as everything but women. And while many of these struggles have moved our people forward, have improved our real lives in concrete ways, and therefore by definition been in the interest of women, no struggle but our own, independent of others, and just and necessary in its own right, can ever hope to meet all our needs. We have a right to this struggle, a right to self-determination and self-definition as women, for women, a right to a new world of our own creation.

If as only one of many women who have come through these changes in the past several years. Unlike many others, though, a few of us have been brought up sharply face to face with our past, and had to confront

**"We have a right to this struggle, a right to self-determination and self-definition as women, a right to a new world of our own creation."**

our former selves, for better or for worse, on the public eye, and under rather dramatic circumstances. At the same time and around the same issues, a deep and significant split has developed in the women's movement. On the one hand are women who, like Jane Alpert, feel that the American system can peacefully accommodate their feminist demands, and that women as women have no obligation to support or protect any peoples' struggle that is not explicitly feminist in ideology or even separatist in practice. These women feel that it is permissible, even desirable, to collaborate with the state in the name of feminism, and that it is in the interest of feminist revolution to dissociate itself from any forces or individuals which are identified as enemies of the state, on the assumption that it is we who bring down state repression on a movement that otherwise could comfortably exist within the belly of the beast.

On the other hand are women whose growth into feminism has made us even more determined not to give in, not to accommodate ourselves to America, not to collaborate against sisters and brothers who are our natural allies in revolution, not to repudiate our past, cut ourselves off at our own roots. For me, feminism is a commitment to be even more radical, to strike more deeply at the root of our oppression. My

feminism does not make me regret economic 'crimes' against one institution of capitalism; it makes me even more determined to see that whole system uprooted forever. My feminism does not make me regret the theft of classified documents that exposed the U.S. government's treachery against the people, including U.S. Army O Plan C -- Operation Geronimo Bravo -- contingency plans for counterinsurgency operations against the civilian population of the Boston area in the event of martial law. My feminism doesn't make me regret the destruction of a single National Guard Armory; it only makes me wish to see every last vestige of patriarchal militarism permanently blotted from the face of the earth.

But more importantly, my feminism does not permit me to collaborate with the Man in order to reduce the amount of time I will have to spend in his prisons. The agreement I am entering into today is made on the condition that I will never testify against Kathy Power or give any information concerning anyone I have known or known about in the past five years. And the ten year and two year sentences are based on the government's understanding that I will give them nothing, ever, not in ten years, not in a hundred years. My feminism does not drive me into the arms of the state, but even further from it.

My guilty plea is predicated upon my understanding that as of this date, the government has agreed to end its investigation in Philadelphia. This means no grand jury, no harboring prosecutions, no legal torture of sisters who refuse to speak to the FBI. The credit for this victory goes to the feminist community here, and to the sisters in New Haven, Connecticut, and in Lexington, Kentucky, whose courage in the face of the FBI and government harassment has been an example to us all. Their resistance has given us time to prepare to protect our communities, our sisters, and ourselves. The government would never have agreed to end its investigation here if it had any hope of success. We have made it clear to them that we are together and unafraid, that our community is closed to their threats, closed to their lies, closed to divisive tactics, that we will stand together and protect what is ours, our homes, our

Continued on page 20



## Lover... Continued from page 15

to gay people?

Part of the answer, of course, lies in the fact that we were all raised to be heterosexuals, and, no matter how much we analyse them, our emotional needs are still 'heterosexual'. The most persistent of those needs is the need for a lover. But I think there's more to it than that.

Sociology has shown us that heterosexuals are driven into marriage by a multitude of forces; economic, religious, institutional, social etc. Those forces act on us as well to some extent, but the difference in gender choice means that our relationships, when they are formed, do not receive the sanctions and succour which straight marriages do. Those forces cannot therefore be seen as the important ones for us. Is the desire for a lover only a matter of imitation, then?

In addition to imitation, I would suggest the force of isolation. It seems to be that an important force acting on our lives is the isolation we feel as children, and all too often, as adults. It created the need to be surrounded by our own people, to feel ourselves in the kind of cocoon which the family provides for heterosexuals. But heterosexual propaganda early fills us with fears and insecurities. Homosexuals, we learn, are sexually voracious, they have no humanity, no community. Our desire for community is soon subverted. We know that we as individuals are in no way inhuman, that we are not driven solely by the sexual urge. But if we swallow straight propaganda, (and with no other information, how can we not?), then we are cut off, by internal walls, from our people. We are different from heterosexuals. And we feel different from what we have learned homosexuals are.

We begin to think "If only I can find one other person like myself, one other who is both homosexual and sane, then I can build a world with him, a world separate from the heterosexual and from the gay world."

Thus, the healthy need for community has been twisted into a desire to cut ourselves off from all but one other person with whom we will build our lives. It is, as we know, often a self-defeating process.

Searching for a lover and ignoring community is always a vain activity. Relationships cannot exist outside of a community. Love as adhesive is a false equation. ■

by MERV WALKER

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# Obscenity laws...

Continued from page 1

ity laws. Guilt feeds and grows on ignorance. These laws hinder the dissemination of accurate and scientific sex information in any popular or accessible form -- certainly in any form freely available to young people. Government, of course, provides its own approved materials for sex education in schools and elsewhere. It is clinical, boring stuff, relentlessly preoccupied with procreation, acknowledging none of the lusts and hungers of the human animal. I do not know (and rather doubt) if Show Me! goes as far as that, but it at least abandons the antiseptic qualities of the line drawing for some joyous and natural photos. Of heterosexuals, in any case.

Nothing dissolves guilt like discovering that hordes of other people share your deepest and lowest fantasies. Pornography does that. It is difficult to continue being wracked by guilt because of the (imagined) bizarre and disgusting nature of your own fantasies after you've had a chance to pore over a stack of porn books -- slick glossies which canvas every possible combination of genital and orifice; and the cumulative effect is not, thankfully, that one is after all normal compared to what those other sickies are doing, but that one's fantasies are shared and developed and enjoyed by other people. It is analogous, for a gay person, to discovering that we are not alone, that there are literally hundreds of thousands of us living, working and loving in this country. Obscenity laws, if they do not totally prevent the sale of such materials, render them available only under conditions (the under-the-counter sale) likely to reinforce whatever feelings of guilt may have been there in the first place.

The authorities are quite aware of the effects of guilt upon the population. It is enervating, it stifles resistance. I do not know anything about Warren Zuffelt, the man implicated in the Ottawa "sex-ring scandal" who leapt to his death after having been charged. But I would hazard a guess that he was not completely happy with his sexual orientation and his probable appetite for younger men. When you are already guilty in your own mind, your first reaction is not outrage that the law should interfere with your private sexual life; your first response is not a preparation for battle. You collapse. You have been finally caught out. It is secretly, I would think, almost a relief: now they KNOW, now you'll finally get what you deserve, you'll no longer soil others with your particular perversion.

We must be aware then that though censorship laws are defended as being necessary for the safety and well-being of people, they are merely contributions to maintaining a manageable populace.

Of course, there are other ramifications, other subtleties. Obscenity laws, and their enforcement, exist partly because they are the only way, given our cultural prejudice against a casual and guiltless expression of our sexual desires, that certain people can, with full propriety, maintain contact with the "forbidden" pleasures. The sexual drive is a strong one -- it will out. And if the only way to get it legitimately into your life is to be preoccupied with excluding it from the lives of others, then that will be the option chosen. That is sensed, I think, by many people. It is a frequent source of humour: the prude who calls the police because she can see a man undressing -- through her binoculars. The

## "Advertising is a very classy and very expensive peep show"

judge, trying an obscenity case, who insists upon being bound naked and flogged by the court clerk whenever the court recesses.

It is also tempting to speculate that the success of most business enterprises depends on the maintenance of a prurient attitude to sex. Advertising creates/intensifies demand in capitalist society, and advertising is a very classy and very expensive peep show. And like a peep show, it ends before anything really interesting happens. It titillates, it excites, it promises -- but it doesn't deliver. Yet it suggests that all those tantalizing things will happen to you if you... buy the product. Would the shabbiness of it all be any clearer, would that particular pitch be less efficacious, if there was unrestricted access to "obscene" materials in this society? Material which *did* deliver? I am not sure, but I like to think so.

Of course, standards (as politicians are quick to assure us) are continually changing. Why, what was inconceivable 10 -- even 5 -- years ago, is now more or less easily accessible on the magazine rack of your local smoke shop. That is, if you've got the bucks. And happen to live in at least a moderately sized urban centre. Both of which qualifications tend to cut young people out of the erotica market. Therein lies the crunch. I suspect a lot of people would feel far happier about unrestricted access to obscene materials if they did not feel that as a result children would get hold of the stuff and be

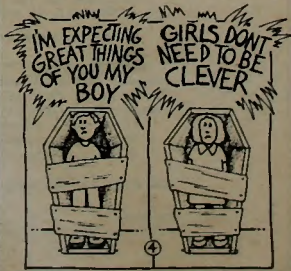
corrupted, depraved, perverted. Now if they mean by that that young people will learn about sex in a scientific, guiltless way, that they will learn to enjoy their own bodies and the bodies of others when they are ready to -- be they 6 or 16 --, that they will, if they are gay, accept their gayness as soon as it is clear to them that they are, that they will understand and practice birth control, that they will interact with people of the opposite sex in a non-sexist way then yes: they *will* be corrupted; we will have our generation of godless perverts. It is not a shattering prospect to me. Nor can it be to Michael Barrett, director of SIBOGAN Toronto, as he and his wife and young daughter spend part of an evening leafing through Show Me!. The girl is variously interested, bored, embarrassed, titillated. The range of responses which might be provoked by a geography lesson at school. Yet there are those who would have us believe that this child is now a fit candidate for the pit.

"If you insist on publishing dirt, you've got to face the consequences." Exactly. One of those consequences is possible seizure, conviction and a fine or jail sentence. We have decided, reluctantly, that we could not risk what would happen to the paper should that occur. For the present, at least, we must keep just this side of the law. Those other consequences: the evaporation of sexual guilt, the spread of non-biased, non-sexist information about sex and its place in our lives, the joyous release of erotic energies -- yes, these we can face. More than that -- we shall bring them about. ■

Is everything, then, permissible? Are all depictions of erotic acts equally valid? Perhaps not.

This article has not considered the question of esteem and erotica. And it should be no surprise to anyone that what is erotic frequently turns out to be sexist as well.

Next issue we explore this topic...



### The last named debt of leave taking

Through the town is a fine raining night.  
An orchard glows in the moon.  
On karyn's guitar  
Sleeping women plumb their hearts.  
Jim cradles arms, thighs. Two men are sound.  
Phyllis and Lynn have a wooden house. And books, many with pictures.  
There is rain through the fine town.  
This orchard grows under the moon.

What I take on the train to another home  
Is the taste of heavy scars of sweet John's back,  
Women of Kathryn's comely passion,  
A fist of man-pop and wild pitch, oleander and ghostcrab;  
Each friend,  
Lover,  
And Loved.  
Named and not.

Peter Pehrson

### Meditation and prayer A song with a funky beat

There's a brand new craze around the town  
Shoop-bop-diddle-bop sagittaricop  
It's a perfect cure if you're feeling down  
Shoop-bop-diddle-bop astrologiop  
Everybody's doin' it  
There's really nothin' new in it  
And the name of the game is (wa wa)  
Meditation and prayer.

If your hubby beats you twice a day  
Shoop-bop-diddle-bop-moon-in-cancerop  
And welfare takes your baby away  
Shoop-bop-diddle-bop-primal-howliop  
You only need some psyching - (uh)  
It's easier than fighting - (uh)  
Just sashay to the ashram for some -  
(wa wa wa)  
Meditation and prayer.

Yes you have to fight for socialism  
And you have to fight for communism  
And you have to fight for feminism  
And you have to fight for lesbianism  
But fighting is a sin  
Cause the maharaji told us  
And praying is the thing  
That the PSI has sold us (SCREAM!)  
And we're giving up the struggle for a  
warm supportive snuggle  
With our sisters at the feminist ashram-o  
(wa wa wa)  
In meditation and prayer.

If you're sexually molested in the street  
Shoop-bop-diddle-bop-vegetariop  
You should purify yourself and not eat meat  
Shoop-bop-diddle-bop-sensitivity-sop  
It's not capitalist relations  
It's only bad vibrations  
If your life is being hassled try...  
(wa wa wa)  
Meditation and prayer.

If your skin is black or yellow or green  
Shoop-bop-diddle-bop-humanismop  
And the racist world is getting you down  
Shoop-bop-diddle-bop-hallelujahop  
If you pay a dollar  
You can pray to change your colour  
And your problem will be solved through...  
(wa wa wa)

MEDITATION AND PRAYEREE

Boo Watson  
Reprinted from *The Other Woman*, Spring 1975.

## Susan Saxe...

Continued from page 17

organizations, our friends and lovers, our private lives. The enemy cannot isolate and terrorize us, cannot walk among us with impunity.

We have shown those few desperate, self-serving terrified women who have urged us to collaborate, to rush to preserve ourselves as individuals, to dissociate ourselves from anyone who poses a real threat to the state, we have shown those women that there is an alternative. When we place the blame for repression squarely on the enemy, not on his targets, when we unite to oppose him, he can be driven away. But when we run to the Man for shelter, when we betray ourselves to appease him, we only expose others to his tactics and increase the danger to us all.

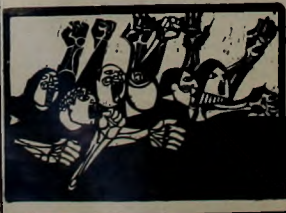
Feminism is not collaboration. Ellen Grushe, Terry Turgeon and Diana Perkins in New Haven, Gail Cohee, Debbie Hands, Linda Link, Jill Raymond, Maria Seymour and a gay brother James Carey Junkin in Lexington have shown us the way. Jill Raymond is still imprisoned in a Kentucky hell-hole and Ellen, Terry, and Diana still face more time in the pastel fascism of Niantic Prison in Connecticut. Write to these sisters, send love and encouragement. Let them know about our victory here and about their role in making it possible. Support them the whole time they are in jail and when they get out, invite them to Philly for a huge celebration. Our victories should be marked and our heras honored.

And now, I'd like to reaffirm the statement I made at the time of my arrest:

First, a greeting of love and strength to all my sisters -- courage for our warriors, hope for our people and especially for all my sisters and brothers underground in America. Keep on fighting, stay free, stay strong. I promise you a courage to match your own. I intend to fight on in every way as a lesbian, a feminist, an Amazon.

The love that I share with my sisters, my people, is a far more powerful weapon than any the police state can bring to bear against us. What else can I say but, once again, that I love you. We are strong, and we are not afraid.

June 9, 1975





## Film

### A Very Natural Thing

NEW YORKER CINEMA  
TORONTO

A Very Natural Thing is a very natural thing because it is a heterosexual thing. There is nothing to separate this opus from the boy-meets-girl, boy-loses-girl, boy (sadder-but-wiser)-meets-another-girl framework but the fact that "girl" in the above scenario is replaced by boy. That small change in the formula is an advance of sorts. But it is nowhere near enough, and in the final analysis the value system it both assumes and endorses is a dangerous one.

The movie takes one important step. That gay people can lead productive, happy and fulfilling lives is treated as a given. Great. But surely the social context in which gay people reach full self acceptance is as important, is after all the crucial thing. What is the social context in A Very Natural Thing? David teaches in a girls' school (that is significant. Why not a boys' school? We know why not.); Mark is a young executive. We see very little of Mark on the job, but what there is suggests the tight-assed young man on the make who (appalling when you consider that this is a gay movie) orders his female secretary around as casually as he would order a coffee. We see a bit more of David in the classroom. He is a dreary teacher, happily fitting into the hierarchy of the educational structure.

People's problems are frequently interesting. Even middle class people's problems are interesting. David and Mark have their share -- they are not extraordinary; basically they are trying to come to terms with the question of monogamy. But surely the most interesting dramatic potential here lies in the possibility of questioning the whole concept of monogamy, then questioning the society which endorses it, then initiating whatever struggle with that society is necessary to change its values. Struggle is powerful dramatic material -- adventure movies, political "thrillers" use it all the time. We need the exhilaration of gay people struggling. And winning. In this movie, the two gay men struggle with their emotions. But that is a kind of dramatic cheat -- it doesn't go far enough; it begs the really interesting question: why they are succumbing to those emotions in the first place?

David is a bit of a prig. That is important because we are so frequently invited by the structure of the movie to endorse his system of values. When he struggles into his shorts after having been grossed out at an orgy we are expected to share his belief that there is something undefinably ghastly about orgies per se. And whatever one may feel about gay baths, they are not the sinister, frightening places depicted in this



Clare Gareth and Robert Joel in the film "A Very Natural Thing".

picture. Casual, recreational sex indulged in with no sense of shame or guilt is one of the triumphs of the gay life style -- this picture invests it with a sense of shame and locates it in the realm of the sordid. That is one giant step backward.

The gay lib movement. It appears, and functions as the *deus ex* to bring David and his second try together. It is a not very convincing plot device. More important, though, is the 'attitude' of the movie. It is positive. But, and this is a major qualification, the gay lib movement is seen as something other people do -- those other people are accepted as doing something undeniably worthwhile yet they are 'out there' -- something happening on the periphery of the very private lives of David and Mark. Yet if we have learned anything at all from our analysis of gay oppression, it is that the private is irrevocably public. At least, what ought to be casually private information -- one's sexual orientation -- has public and political repercussions. How long would David have been teaching in that smart girls' school, for example, if he'd been seen romping with Mark? A Very Natural Thing avoids that question, and does the whole movement a disservice.

The ending? It does seem as if David's consciousness has been raised -- he is very wary about entering fully into this new relationship with Jason and argues that they should not live together: as if that were the essence of monogamy. But the images here deny the argument -- that ecstatic slow motion romp in the surf is the cinematic cliché which inevitably heralds a lifetime of marital bliss.

We have been had. A Very Natural Thing is a heterosexual movie -- only the sex of one of the protagonists has been changed. This time, to corrupt the innocent.

by GERALD HANNON

## Theatre

### No Deposit — No Return

W.S.D.G. GAY THEATRE  
NEW YORK

Writers and audiences have come to expect that when the central theme of a play is homosexuality, the homosexual will be seen as abnormal. The treatment varies, depending on the writer, from ridicule to sympathetic understanding. But in either case, the homosexual is always characterised in terms of her/his difference from straight society; she/he is always the 'other'.

Gay solidarity -- consciousness-raising directed toward gays as members of an oppressed class -- is a subject which has rarely been attempted in popular theatre. Instead, the focus has been on the more distasteful manifestations of gay oppression.

Written by Robert Wallace, directed by John Palmer (both Canadians), "No Deposit - No Return" takes a radically different approach. The



stage is New York's Sheridan Square subway washroom. The players are five men who, due to the jamming of the washroom door, are forcibly brought into dramatic interaction. The result is a confrontation of opposites -- hostility and love, sex and God -- produced by five men who in any other circumstance would never have looked at, let alone encountered, one another.

With the salty recklessness that makes a work of art sting, Wallace focuses on costume and image as the factors which prevent any significant solidarity from arising within the gay world. Using the forced circumstance of imprisonment in a washroom, he develops spontaneous antagonisms into genuine feelings. The principle character, Sara Lee, "a gender-fuck from Hoboken who needs a blow brush to make it big" is antagonized by the other characters because he "ridicules men and women" through his dress. Merideth, a 63-year old religious convert, is antagonized because of his faith and the passivity it demands. Cooper, a young collegiate activist, is antagonized because he constantly spouts empty theories of liberation -- the type which not only serve as surrogate for his own inability to experience emotion, but which also serve to further cleave gay people as a class. The leather-bound Duke is antagonized because of his machismo-laden conservatism.

The principal antagonist in these struggles, though he doesn't always take the active role, is Flick: black, straight, and a doctrinaire disciple of Huey Newton. In the end, however, Cooper discovers himself and leads the cast in proving the falsity of Flick's supremacy. Flick is left with a much deflated impression of himself: he is a man no better or worse than any other.

There is nothing radical about the style of "No Deposit". What is radical is its message: that people should be able to relate no matter what their colour, spiritual belief, sex, or mode of dress; that only through displacing image with feeling, or definition with reality can a movement toward solidarity be made and that the achievement of this displacement is not impossible. Male-stream thought, its definitions and its values, is neither necessary nor valid: what is both necessary and valid is a personal realisation of what *is*, and a methodology for the integration of what the self is with what others are. To paraphrase Sara Lee: "If everybody would be the freak that he really is, there'd be no more freaks, because nobody would know the difference."

The cast of "No Deposit", most notably Torontonians Saul Rubinek as Sara Lee and Anthony Baisa as Merideth, provide an excellent performance, especially in that the West Side Discussion Group production is an Equity Showcase (i.e. no pay). Palmer's direction of a play which might easily be clumsily handled or misinterpreted, is a blend of spontaneity and precision, inspirational in any theatre's terms, no matter what its budget. Whether or not an audience picks up on every intricacy



A scene from "No Deposit -- No Return".

photo: Lee Carr

of the script, "No Deposit - No Return" packs the punches, tells the story, and asks the questions needed to help its audience become aware of what people, as people, really are.

by JAMES WILSON

## Books

THE LAVENDER AND RED UNION

### The Political Perspective

L&R Union, 6618 Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, Ca., 1975, 13p, 75¢  
also available from Glad Day Books,  
139 Seaton St., Toronto.

The Political Perspective is dedicated "to Lesbians and Faggots, to those who perished for their suffering, to those who survived for their strength, and to those who fight back for their courage."

The document represents a crystallization of developing Marxist thought within Gay Liberation. Unfortunately it also mirrors many of the weaknesses found in the straight Left.

A Marxist critique of anti-homosexual society must arise out of the struggle for our own liberation. We must collect the data and develop an understanding of the roots and experience of homosexual oppression through history and anthropology. "Correct" formulations, parachuted in from the straight Left, cannot replace this work no matter how well intentioned.

The first part of the Perspective therefore merits most criticism. We are presented with a collection of orthodox Leninist truisms, a jargonistic analysis of class society, imperialism and capitalism. The difference is that Gay comes first

on the inevitable list of oppressed "minority groups."

Often the text degenerates into sloganeering which weakens important statements like "Gay people will never be free under capitalism", by leaving them without logical or historical substantiation.

If this approach is methodologically questionable, it is disastrous pedagogy. Overstating conclusions before explaining basic assumptions or their process of development is simply not convincing. There are few who are not already committed Gay Marxists who will appreciate much of the work in the pamphlet.

Only in the second part of the Perspectives does the Union begin to grapple with the real problems of a Marxist position on Gay liberation. Their answers are often sketchy, but provide a valuable basis for discussion.

The nuclear family is necessary for the maintenance of capitalism. Sex role stereotyping is necessary to maintain the nuclear family. Gay people challenge these role definitions. We therefore put the "natural" nuclear family in question. We are therefore dangerous for capitalism and must be repressed.

Bisexuality (outside a transitional bisexuality as a stage of coming out) is seen as a ruling class response to the gay movement. It is an attempt to tell gays that we too can fit inside the family structure. The ideal of bisexuality is a liberal ideology which defuses the critical revolutionary potential of gay liberation.

The authors do, however, leave room for the emergence of a true, non-gender defined sexuality. This can only occur under completely different social conditions, i.e. during the final transition to communism.

On a different level Gay oppression is seen as a way of dividing



## OUR IMAGE

straight and gay workers in the same way that racism divides black and white workers. The primary question is the class question between capitalists and workers.

The Union is sharply critical of the "Social Service Centre approach". This is seen as a swing to the right. It is an attempt to integrate gays into the system which oppresses them and to use gays to oppress other gays.

The Perspective calls for the creation of a "banned communist party" which would be made up of "the most advanced and conscious elements among Gay, women, Black, Brown, Asian, American Indian and white workers." However, since no such organization exists at this time, it is necessary to work autonomously.

The important strategy in the future must be trade union work in shops where gays predominate or are a large minority. Work directed toward the gay community as a whole should be continued.

The union expresses critical support for a number of socialist countries while recognizing that the problem of sexism is far from solved anywhere. Their characterization of the USSR as "revisionist" and "imperialist", however, flows more from their neo-Maoist political orientation than from any perceived difference in the treatment of gays in Russia as compared to China.

In spite of their fascination with communist rhetoric, the Union makes its position clear on the straight left. "The relationship between the socialist movement and Gay liberation is the foulest chapter in the

they focus their energies on solving the specific problems of Gay liberation.

Marxism has a great deal to teach Gay liberation. More importantly, however, the struggle for Gay liberation has the potential to fill many of the huge gaps in traditional Marxian theory and practice, especially on questions of sexuality and repression. It is these gaps which have contributed to many of the historical defeats suffered by the movements for socialism and human liberation in this century.

by TIM McCASKELL

### Gay Spirit

A GUIDE TO BECOMING A SENSUOUS HOMOSEXUAL  
David Looivis  
Grove Press, 1974, \$5.95.

It was inevitable that sooner or later, some sharp writer after a fast buck would write this book. So now we have a gay sequel to the sensuous sex manuals of a few years back -- and probably not the last one, either. One might almost think gay liberation had arrived.

According to David Looivis it has! From chapter one, subtitled "Gay is Never Having to Say You're Sorry": "From (the Stonewall riots) on, it has been the right time to be alive and gay in America... In our new and hard won freedom, we mustn't forget those times... We've told the world that gay is good and beautiful and sexy. We've been heard. Now we've got to show we meant what we said."

This kind of willful blindness to gay realities pervades *Gay Spirit*. Unfortunately, it merely echoes a widely-voiced sentiment in the gay community, in the process cashing in on what people want to be told.

The message of this book can be summed up in two trite phrases: 'think positive' and 'put your best foot forward'. Realizing how little he has to say on the topic, Looivis has fleshed out his guide with long anecdotal fantasies about the sex lives of those who have become truly sensuous (himself included). These anecdotes are the essence of the book. It must entertain, since it does not instruct.

My major objection, however, is the way in which Looivis tries to justify the most oppressive attitudes held by and about gay people. To begin with, he quite flatly states that everyone fits into an "archetypal sexual role", dominant or submissive, and part of self-awareness is discovering and asserting that role (he allows for some experimentation). Even if, as he maintains, these roles are shed at the bedroom door, they cannot help drastically limiting one's experience, since another of his basic tenets is never to end up with someone whose sexual tastes are the same as yours.

Elaborating on his predatory approach Looivis goes on to counsel careful modulation of voice ("make it a lasso to draw him in") and behaviour ("don't swish") and an obsessive concern with appearance, the

latter including a shameless 10 page promo for the male clothing industry. Aside from this needless emphasis on objectification, Looivis' requirements exclude a large number of gays: those who are unattractive, or fat, or timid or high-strung; or poor. It takes more than a crash-course in plasticity to change such qualities -- assuming they need to be changed in the first place.

Not surprisingly, an under-current of misogyny runs through this book, manifest in anti-transvestite/'femme' attitudes, and an insistence on 'manliness'. At one genuinely shocking point, all this wells up in a page-long catalogue of everything the author hates most about women.

About the only positive advice in this book is that we learn to relax, experiment with and enjoy sex. Doubtless, there are many straights and gays who need to learn that. Otherwise, any serious consideration can only lead to a superficial and predatory attitude to gay relationships.

Do not buy this book, even to laugh at it. Looivis threatens to write another one, and high sales on this number will only encourage him.

by ROBERT TROW

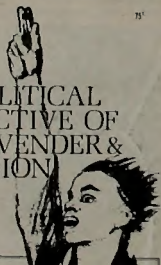
### Homosexuality: Time to Tell the Truth

Leonard Barnett  
Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1975, \$7.50.

A positive book about gays by a Christian minister is about as unlikely as a positive book about blacks by a Mississippi policeman. However sincere the author is, his background is almost certain to prejudice his writings. Such, unfortunately, is the case in Leonard Barnett's *Homosexuality: Time to Tell the Truth*.

It would be an injustice to write the book off completely. It is one of the first books for young people which deals with homosexuality in a positive, rational manner. It does an excellent job of breaking down most of the myths and fallacies about gays, and the questions for discussion should help readers ask the many questions they would ordinarily hesitate about. Perhaps most important, the author recognizes

### THE POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE LAVENDER & RED UNION



GAY LIBERATION IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT SOCIALIST REVOLUTION  
SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IS INCOMPLETE WITHOUT GAY LIBERATION

recent history of the Left. There has been no analysis of why Gay people are oppressed, and in place of that many revolutionaries have put forth as science bourgeois myths. "Without a strong Gay voice within the Communist movement, it is possible that the revolution will leave us in chains against which to struggle anew."

A Marxist analysis of sexuality and sexual oppression is finally developing. The Lavender and Red Union will no doubt be important in this process. Their contribution will be positive to the extent that



## OUR IMAGE

that many of his young readers are gay, and with some reservations he encourages them to accept this.

The book deals principally with the situation regarding gay men in Britain. Gay women are sadly neglected; indeed the author's ignorance is astonishing. At one point he claims that society has "exercised a tolerant, far more relaxed attitude to lesbianism" (than to gay men). I think British lesbians would be surprised to learn this.

Inevitably, there is a lot of space devoted to the theological gymnastics required to justify a positive approach to homosexuality in light of traditional Christian thought. Characteristically, the author follows the Church's usual practice of circumventing the glaring injustices while stopping short of a radical re-examination of Christian ethics. Hence while homosexual acts within a permanent (but not marriage) relationship are acceptable, casual sex is not. Having undermined the traditional Christian rationale for such a pronouncement, he justifies his position principally by references to the dangers of VD. (He does not say whether he condemns other activities with occupational hazards -- most athletes require occasional medical attention.)

Leonard Barnett's acceptance of gays is clearly limited. Time and time again phrases appear which would indicate that homosexuality is inferior, perhaps the most devastating being his unsupported statement that gays face a moral challenge "inasmuch as there is on the whole a greater likelihood of such pressure unduly influencing somebody young and inexperienced into homosexual activity which may not be truly natural for the younger person concerned." -- some myths obviously have yet to be dealt with.

The author ends by speaking highly of the liberal gay groups in Britain, but gay liberation is frowned upon, as is any other action which might lead to radical change. The church has always believed it has a god-given right to pass judgement on personal sexual behaviour, and it is not about to relinquish its place in the bedrooms of the world.

by IAN TURNER

## Show Me!

A PICTURE BOOK OF SEX FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS  
Dr. H. Fleischhauer-Hardt (text),  
Will McBride (photography)  
St. Martin's Press, \$14.95. Banned in Canada.

The prudes of the world never learn. What with bannings at the border, visits from morality squad officers, threats of obscenity charges, fulminating editorials and outcries from incensed liberals, this new sex education book has received three times as much publicity as it might have if MacMillans had been able to import its few thousand copies into Canada unimpeded. Certainly, when it finally does get

through, there can be no doubt about vastly increased sales.

The photos, which are the controversial elements in the book, show children exploring their own and each other's bodies, including their genitals. We also see erections, and masturbation, but no orgasms. A cock is even shown entering a vagina, which as certainly an advance over clinical cross-sectional diagrams of limp cocks. Because the book is aimed at adolescent children and their parents, there is a commendable emphasis on touching and feeling and discovery. Two boys touch and compare circumcised and uncircumcised cocks; two girls touch and compare breast sizes. The Toronto Sun reviewer, of course, saw those embraces as 'sneaky', apparently because there were no warnings of dire consequences or assurances that it was only childish experimentation.

Homosexuality, predictably, is not mentioned save for a short section in the appendix of the text. Most of the section is taken up with definitions, but it does accept that there exist satisfying partnerships "rather like marriage" which can include ingredients like love and tenderness. It allows that the precise causes of homosexuality are not known, and that we have existed throughout history.

Not bad, you say, but I submit that this approach is more insidious than outright bigotry. By putting the mention in a short appendix, by omitting any photos which relate directly to gayness, by bringing up causation even if only to admit science's bafflement, *Show Me!* ensures that we continue to be seen as peripheral, anomalous, extra-ordinary.

The context of the book is resolutely that of heterosexual family and marriage. The sex is always legitimized by deep love or responsibility or commitment or desire to have children, etc. etc. Mum and Daddy, for example, love each other, they love each other so much that they finally have sex as an expression of that love. Which is fine, except that this is the *only* possibility articulated.

Although the text warns against forcing children into narrow sex roles (let boys learn to cook if they want to), it seems to be subtly negated by an unquestioning gender determinism. Boys and girls are meant for each other. Each always has sex with the other, and they will grow up to marry and have families too. The two final photos are accompanied by huge captions -- little boy: "I want to be like father"; little girl: "I want to be like mother". Perhaps the intention is purely anatomical, a realization of identity as biological male or female, but it is far too ambiguous given the amount of sex role stereotyping pervasive in our culture.

Basically the children are encouraged to do it only one way: genital to genital. There are two discreet shots of oral-genital contact (e.g. a delicate kiss planted by his girlfriend on the tip of big brother's erection), but there is little mention in the text of variations in sexual expression. Although lip service is paid to freedom, we are warned: "On no account must non-repressive sex education be equated with the recommendation of indiscriminate indulgence in sex." What are the dangers of this indiscriminate indulgence? If it is unwanted pregnancy, why is there not, then, dis-





cussion of the various means of circumventing fertilized ovaries? I guess because sex must still be seen as a serious business.

Show Me! uses progressive methods to teach and reinforce rather traditional values about sexuality. It exhibits the same old heterosexual arrogance, that confident but false assumption of all-inclusiveness.

So what did I expect? Obviously something more. Gay children have a right to be taught things which can be related to their own sexual development. They are given nothing here.

by ED JACKSON

## Sexual Signatures

ON BEING A MAN OR A WOMAN  
John Money and Patricia Tucker  
Little, Brown, 1975. \$7.95.

Sexual Signatures is an easy-to-read and sometimes entertaining book about "how we become male or female by stages" from conception to adulthood through the interaction of biology and society. Tucker is a journalist, Money a medical psychologist, co-founder of the Johns Hopkins Gender Identity Clinic. Though it is best known for operations on transsexuals, the clinic was founded mainly for people born as hermaphrodites. Hermaphrodites with the same 'error of the body' at birth can be successfully raised as either a boy or a girl (with appropriate surgical and hormonal treatments), which pretty well delivers the final blow to the 'anatomy is sexual destiny' school of thought. The authors compare gender differentiation to language learning: everyone is biologically equipped to learn language but socially programmed to learn a particular language. (Unfortunately, almost all of their information on language is in contradiction to the findings of scientific linguistics, so the real possibilities in the comparison are lost).

We learn that there are exactly four universal differences between the sexes: only men impregnate, only women menstruate, gestate and lactate. Hormones related to these functions make it potentially easier for females to react to stimuli for parental behaviour, but they do not make one sex perform these activities better, and their effects can be neutralised or reversed (or reinforced) by socialization. Males who do not have enough of the hormone androgen before and after birth are "quieter, less inclined to join in competitive sports" but "no more likely to become homosexual than the test girls (with too much androgen) are likely to become lesbian". We are not told whether males with too much androgen are more likely to be heterosexual, presumably because that's not something to worry about. The authors have a somewhat irritating way of telling (reassuring?) the reader that this or that does not lead to homosexuality. Although this is good in counteracting popular myths, it also expresses an ap-



## Charlie's Opening

One of the images by gay artist Evergon at his exhibit, "Charlie's Opening", held at Gallery Graphics in Ottawa. The show was specially extended so that delegates and others at the National Conference could attend.

The images were the most explicitly gay which Evergon has attempted, and were frequently successful in depicting the beauty, humour, and raunchy exuberance of gay life.

parent feeling of theirs that 'correct' sex orientation is the litmus test of true masculinity and femininity (outside the reproductive differences).

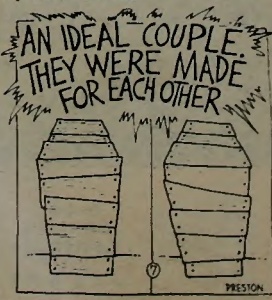
The main 'point' made is that gender identity should be firmly grounded in differences of reproductive potential rather than in occupational and recreational interests, dress, etc: there is no immediate prospect of test-tube babies, whereas the other differences could well lessen considerably in our lifetime. Yet the authors curiously keep insisting that there will always be some other differences, however much flexibility there may be. Anthropological facts suggest that the foundation of sex roles is the division of labour between the sexes: in early societies, men hunted, women gathered plants. In Canada today boys are raised with the personality suited to being a breadwinner on the competitive market, girls to being housewife-mothers in the home, sometimes supplementing family income with low-paid work. The real sexual revolution, in various stages in different countries, is the withering away of this division. When this is complete, it is hard to see how masculinity and femininity would be very important concerns, even with reproductive differences. On the other hand, as long as the division of labour remains strong, it is somewhat utopian to think that people could ground their identity in something else, by a mere act of the will. Gay or straight, they have been raised since birth to be either breadwinners or housewife-mothers.

Money and Tucker make a mistake in defining homosexuality as "erotic response to individuals with the same kind of external sexual anatomy", a sort of purely aesthetic matter. Maybe it would be better to

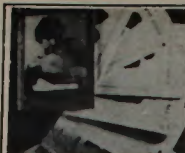
say that it is attraction to someone with the same gender identity (recognised by anatomy), and that it is not approved because people still suppose that society's tasks must continue to be quite rigidly divided -- through the family -- between the two roles. But as the division of tasks decreases in actual practice, 'correct' sex orientation becomes meaningless; and gay liberationists organise themselves to say so.

Money and Tucker claim that gays are staunch defenders of sex differences. That's because they seem to think that most gay men are either ultra fem or ultra butch, one of a few misunderstandings that gay, transvestite, SSM and perhaps other readers will have to put up with. Still, the prejudices of the authors are kept fairly distinct from the facts presented. The sections on homosexuality could have included more of what is known on the subject, but on the whole, use of the book in schools and libraries would promote scientific sex education.

by BRIAN MOSSOP



Cartoons reprinted from special gay issue (January 1975) of *Case* Con. radical social workers' magazine from England.



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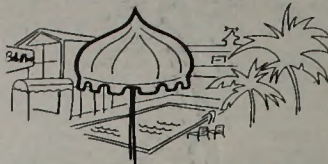
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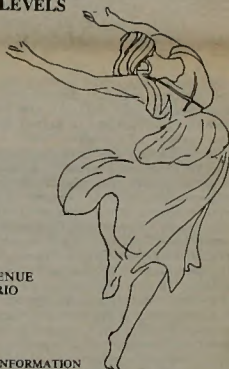


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## Books

### Consenting Adult

Laura Z. Hobson  
Doubleday, 1975, \$9.25

"All previous novels dealt primarily with the homosexuals themselves, with their problems, their point of view, while this one takes the opposite stance entirely and focuses on the parents and family of the homosexual, their pain, their fears, their point of view." -- dust jacket.

If it had never occurred to homosexuals before that their parents might go through a great deal of pain/fear/sorrow more we would be



Laura Z. Hobson

out. Sensitivity is a cliché, but it is precisely sensitivity to parents' discomfort which we must submerge if we are successfully to leave the closet. We do not deserve the pain/fear/sorrow and we must see that letting our parents share some of it is not somehow avoiding our punishment. We would therefore have tended to say that it could not be helpful for our literature to dwell on parents and their problems of acceptance.

The novel traces the change in consciousness in the mother of a gay man from 1960 to 1973. Predictably her first concern is to have him become heterosexual at whatever cost. She pays for four futile years in therapy. Eventually thoughts of those years evoke anger in her but only because she learns of therapy who feels attempts at curing homosexuals can be dangerous. The enormous cost is never really tallied. Through her own reading and thinking she gradually comes to view homosexual oppression as a part of the sexism of our culture. She follows the growth of the gay movement eagerly, and contributes to the changing views in the psychiatric profession by arranging for her company (she is an editor) to publish a book by one of the 'radical' psychiatrists who believe that homosexuality is not an illness. Her son takes no part in raising her consciousness, but it is apparent that he is going through a parallel development during the thirteen years of the novel. And

the end sees them reconciled, with Jeff and his lover coming 'home' for Christmas. Presumably he will no longer be gruff and cruel, silent on the topic of gayness as he has been throughout. I might wish for a less tortured and more talkative Jeff, but I will settle for the promise of his reform which the end of the novel provides.

Hobson is a little squeamish about sex. At one point she spends two pages deploring graphic descriptions of sex in modern novels. And the vision of Jeff making love to another man haunts his parents to the implausible extent of preventing love-making between the two of them. Every time his father even thinks of sex, the image of two men together springs to his mind and he is filled with repulsion. A little unlikely, I think.

In her support of gay rights the key words for her are 'consenting' and 'adult'. She returns again and again to the Wolfenden Report and its 'humane' recommendations. Needless to say, gayness is seen as monolithic. The more contentious areas of boylove and S&M are ignored completely.

Yet as a novel by a liberal straight, *Consenting Adult* is light years ahead of others in its category (most notably *The Front Runner*). Hobson has discussed sexism, has talked about homosexuality in terms of oppression, and has shown both a homosexual and an 'older generation' heterosexual coming to terms with gayness and joining the liberation struggle. It deserves the success that *The Front Runner* has achieved.

by MERV WALKER

### The family...

Continued from page 13

vidual is one way and another is some other way is unknown. There is no reason why your next three children should require more or less of anything than you've given to the first three.

You pointed out that "your home is still here, and we are still here, and we are the same parents you've always known." Of course you are. People don't change overnight. I'm the same son you've always known too. Perhaps you just know me a little better than you used to. And there is no possibility whatever of me shutting you out of my life as long as you are reasonable about the few requests I have made in this letter.

### Support

Mom's and Dad's letters shocked me. I can't believe they actually wrote such garbage. I always knew they were old fashioned but really that is ridiculous. They make it sound as if the life you have chosen is completely rotten. Well, if it is then so is mine as there is no difference. I'll do what I can to explain to them that there is nothing wrong with you and that you aren't sick and all the other weird things they suggested.

### Reconciliation

I guess I should start this letter by apologizing for the ones we sent you. I don't think you will believe me when I say that we didn't intend to hurt you or cause you so much unhappiness. By the angry one you wrote us I'm afraid we did.

We should have taken more time to think about it and read up on it and to try and understand it better. You're so right when you say we were going through a crisis. We certainly were, but I think we've come through it now. I suppose we reacted as a lot of parents do. Maybe if we had known as Merle did, our reaction would have been much the same as hers.

What she wrote you, "I'm proud of you for having the guts to stand up for yourself and be your own man," is what I've always told you kids to do and I'm so thankful that you have been able to do just that. From what I can understand from the books you sent you need a good strong character to stand up to the heterosexual world and fight for your cause. As the book *The Gay Mystique* says, the only difference is one's sex life and to be a person's private life is his own affair.

Please forgive us Merv, for our stupidity and ignorance, and try to read our letters again and see the love and concern for you. You know us well enough to know that we were not trying to force religion, or medical advice or anything else on you. We were searching for answers to things we couldn't understand. We have only wanted the best things in life for our family and of course to us that means a home and family etc. But apparently happiness comes differently to different people. I'm glad you have a job; and you have met so many good friends and that you're happy living in Toronto. What are your plans for the future? ■

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**Cuba...** Cont. from p.2  
male it, and it represents my commitment to struggle on behalf of all oppressed people.

Southin avers that Cuban gay people have been "seriously let down and even compromised" by myself and others, but I can affirm that I am confident that Cuban gay people are supportive of the voices being raised to protest the policies of the Cuban government, whether those voices are quiet ones (such as Southin's) or louder ones (such as mine). At this point, I would be happy to support his approach, his efforts, though shriller voices might call him a "sell-out" to the straight-identified male left. But if I am to support his kind of struggle, he should consider the value of mine and not join with the macho Cubans in calling me "counter-revolutionary".

Perhaps the origin of the conflict has to do with the origin of our relationship to Cuba. I traveled to Cuba as a political activist, committed to international solidarity and to revolution in America. Southin traveled to Cuba as a man of science, a professional willing to offer his help to a revolutionary nation. For me, the challenges of the politics of gay-feminism posed a serious threat to my whole identity. To retain loyalty to the Cuban revolution would be, for me, to deny everything I was learning from the gay-feminist movement. As for earning the right to criticize Cuba, I could, I suppose, say that I earned the right on the basis of a decade in which I spoke out and wrote in favour of the Cuban revolution. But, more to the point, I feel that I earned the right to criticize Cuba simply on the basis of my life as a "faggot" in America and on the basis of the love I feel for the people who are the victims of Cuban machismo and an authoritarian government.

Allen Young  
Orange, Massachusetts

Dear Brothers,

Thanks for the kindly sent number 19. The Allen Young article is full of our reality. Who says another thing haven't seen our country so deeply as Mr. Young.

Give our sincere congratulations to Allen and all members of Body Politic collective. Your work is very important for our future. We are sure that someday, soon, we will be free in love and humanity.

Love and kisses.

Cuban Gays

I was glad to see the article on "Gays in Cuba" which appeared in your July-August, 1975, issue. However, I have to agree with John Southin's criticisms of the article. Those of us with socialist tendencies are very much interested in the status and well-being of gay brothers and sisters in the various socialist states now in existence. I realize that given the nature of Stalinism and

the resulting oppression of gay people by this perverted form of socialism that it is impossible to receive accurate and verifiable information on the status of gay people in some of the socialist countries.

Awhile back there appeared a revolutionary gay group of socialists in Portugal. I was very much interested in learning more about the struggle of these gay brothers and sisters. Unfortunately, information about the struggle they were involved in disappeared almost as fast as it appeared. Certainly, the people involved in this struggle are still alive and it would be interesting to try and contact them to receive information from them as well as their ideological perspectives on gay liberation, feminism, and effeminism.

Therefore, perhaps your collective group should resolve to take a more aggressive role in trying to obtain information from gays in the socialist states to share with the rest of us. At any rate, more articles on gays in socialist states would certainly be appreciated. Accuracy would be nice, but second-hand and third-hand anecdotes are better than no news at all.

Joel Starkey  
Southern Gay Liberator  
Boca Raton, Florida

## Coming out

*The following is a letter sent via The Body Politic to Jim Dougan in response to the letter to his parents ("A Family Affair") published in issue #19.*

It took courage to write that letter to your folks. I admire you. I only wish I had had the same self-awareness and courage at your age. I am, at age 40, a married man with wonderful children. I have a college education, a comfortable job and a comfortable home life. During the past five years I have become more aware of my dissatisfactions and frustrations. I am recognizing that I have repressed the homosexual aspect of my life for many years. If I were to disclose this nature I would certainly lose my family, my job, my associates. I frankly don't know what I'd have left. At this point I cannot take the risk. Therefore I respect and admire you for your openness and honesty with yourself and with others. I believe that despite the risk and the recriminations you'll be a better person for your stand and will not have to go through life covering up, denying, apologizing, and being dishonest with yourself and others.

A Friend

## Harold Hedd

I thank you for printing the Harold Hedd cartoon page, especially the squares which showed the two men sucking each other's cocks and enjoying the splurge and splurge of their hot male cum. We need to have a lot

of this printed and made available to those whose tastes are so inclined.

I would also like to commend you on the wisdom of not fighting out the issue of your right to publish and to sell, in public, whatever you see fit. The mind of the public is not rational, and at present it is retreating from the new and gloriously open sexuality; my hunch is that this new freedom represents a grave threat to anyone whose emotions are distorted through suppression.

For the same reason, I must ask you to withhold my name and address, and also to omit any mention of the church-related group name on this letterhead. My purpose in writing was to give you some emotional support from across the border, rather than to expose the rather fragile beginning of an attempt to beard the lion in his den.

An instance in point: last year, I was unexpectedly and summarily evicted from a church property merely because of the threat that publicity might ensue from my activities in exploring the distress resulting from suppression of sexuality.

Name and address withheld at request of writer.

## No reason at all

As I left the University of Ottawa Law Building for the last time, I heard someone ask, after the delegates to the National Gay Conference passed a motion to send Dr. Morgentaler a letter of support, "What does abortion have to do with being gay?" and in a way I had to ask myself the same question. I thought, I am certainly pro-abortion, and there are gay women who get raped and become pregnant; but at the time I felt so removed from such issues. Afterwards I felt a bit ashamed because I had realized that I was allowing my gayness to become an enigma, as if that was all I was, gay; and I couldn't get it together to identify with other oppressions. Nevertheless, it made me realize that as one of those restless alternative seekers, I did not resent those people in the conference room passing motion after motion in the name of gay rights. I just felt alienated from them. Some had a reason for being there. Others, including myself, did not. Instead I played tag, went swimming with a group of new friends, joined hands with twenty others in a circle and danced down Sparks St., led a group on massage which turned into an orgy, danced in the Lord Elgin (I've always had a secret desire to do it) and generally let loose, made new friends, talked a lot, screwed a lot, listened a lot, shit disturbed and had a really fine time.

So I felt fine, and I'm sure all those people in the conference room who were passing motions had a fine time too. But can I suggest something for next year? If we need to have a National Gay Conference, then let's have one for no reason at all. Anyone second the motion?

Jeff McLaughlin  
Malakwa, B.C.



## Indeterminate sentence

This past fall the Governor of California fought bitterly to retain the California Adult Authority (Parole Board) and the indeterminate sentence, for a period of one year, to prove that it could be correctly administered.

At present there is a young man, supposedly the type of case the indeterminate sentence is designed to benefit, who has become the victim of this system and needs your help to get a fair hearing from the Adult Authority.

This young man was arrested at 19 for rape and attempted rape. Under the indeterminate sentence the prison term is not fixed and the date of release is based on what the prisoner accomplishes and on his developing an understanding of why he committed the crime.

The finding upon entering prison was that this young man's crime was directly related to a mental disorder of being unable to accept and understand his homosexual desires, or Sexual Identity problem. The police reports and trial records also indicate this in that he was unable to achieve erection during the commission of the crime. (It was a fine line they drew to call the one charge rape.)

He first became involved in homosexual activities at age five, and became increasingly involved as he became older. His mother understood and accepted his behaviour, while his father beat him for showing gay traits. He was placed in a long series of camps, boys' homes and foster homes for being beyond the control of his parents. While at home he would be in continual trouble, yet while away from home he was seldom in any trouble. When he was 16, his mother died and this left only his father for him to turn to. He then began trying to prove he was not gay by a long series of 'manly' acts including joining the Marines and finally attempting rape.

It is the total agreement of the prison staff that the crimes were the result of a sexual identity problem, and it is also totally agreed by them that he now accepts and understands the problem, thus the problem is resolved. In addition to reaching this level of understanding, he is within a few weeks of completing 4 years of high school while in prison, and has taken 18 hours of college work. In addition he has worked on the creation of a half-way house in San Francisco and is now working on a second one in Los Angeles. He has a job offer for January 18, 1976 for a training program to become an assistant manager of the L.A. half-way house.

When he went to the parole board in June everyone figured there would be no problems. He was seeking a release date of mid-January 76. Not only did they not grant him a release date to correspond with his job offer; they did not grant him a release date period... The same panel of board members then granted a release date to another inmate with



New bath in town? Nope. Just a window display at Eaton's College St. store in Toronto. And right across from the YMCA. Not so dumb, these capitalists.

Photo: Gerald Newman

all negative reports, several write-ups, and no progress in therapy.

This is a strike against every inmate that attempts to make progress and become a good citizen. We would like to ask the assistance of the many people who can grasp the seriousness of this type of a system. Letters demanding a new board hearing for Harry S. Lieble 853731 and protesting this decision made in the name of justice should be sent to: Gov. Brown, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814, U.S.A. Carbon copies should be sent to: Richard A. Cassetta, Attorney at Law, 1012 24th St., Sacramento, CA 95816.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Ronald Rose  
Vacaville, California

## Throat-ramming

I really appreciated the article on throat-ramming (issue 18); having spent the last five years as a fairly adamant "rammer", I understand the intense need for such activities. But last year I moved to a small town in N.W. Washington (we can see Canada across the Straits!) and most of those activities ceased. My friend and comrade, who grew up in this town, tells me it's simply my big-city chauvinism, and that Port Angeles is no more dangerous than any of the big cities where I've "rammed" before.

Sure, I've gotten negative reactions before, but the two most violent were at most unexpected places; once in Eugene (Oregon's) one Gay (?) bar and once after an anti-war demonstration in Seattle, the attackers being supposed comrades in the demo.

But there's something forbidding about being too overt in Port Angeles. Even at the local hip tavern, where management encourages us to drink, probably to make their place look even hipper, we've run into definitely negative (albeit not violent) vibes. And on campus here (I'm taking an automotive mechanics 2-year program), I'm definitely toned down -- it took me a whole semester to decide to wear very

small earrings to class!

And the contradictions -- having been a fairly outspoken "rammer", I feel it's somewhat intellectually and personally dishonest to be so relatively straight-appearing in town and to go to Seattle and become a flaming faggot again. If I can't carry it off in my own town, I feel as if I've lost my right to proselytize for open faggotry wherever I go. It's as if I'm starting over from scratch again, back where I was at five years ago: only going out dancing if there's a large group, and even then, not too often. Practically no public displays of affection. Conservative dress (by faggot standards).

As a "rammer", I always encouraged friends and comrades to push the limits that had been set, feeling that the more people that did something, the less conspicuous each individual would be. And if even one of us set a limit way beyond where everyone else was at, it would then allow people to be open to a smaller degree without bearing the full brunt of open faggotry, while giving those of us on the very front lines a secure feeling knowing that there were others behind us.

But where were all those other people that should have been behind us? I found the lack of positive response from the remainder of the Gay community to be more painful to understand than the abuse heaped on me by hets.

Fayegele Singer  
Port Angeles, Washington









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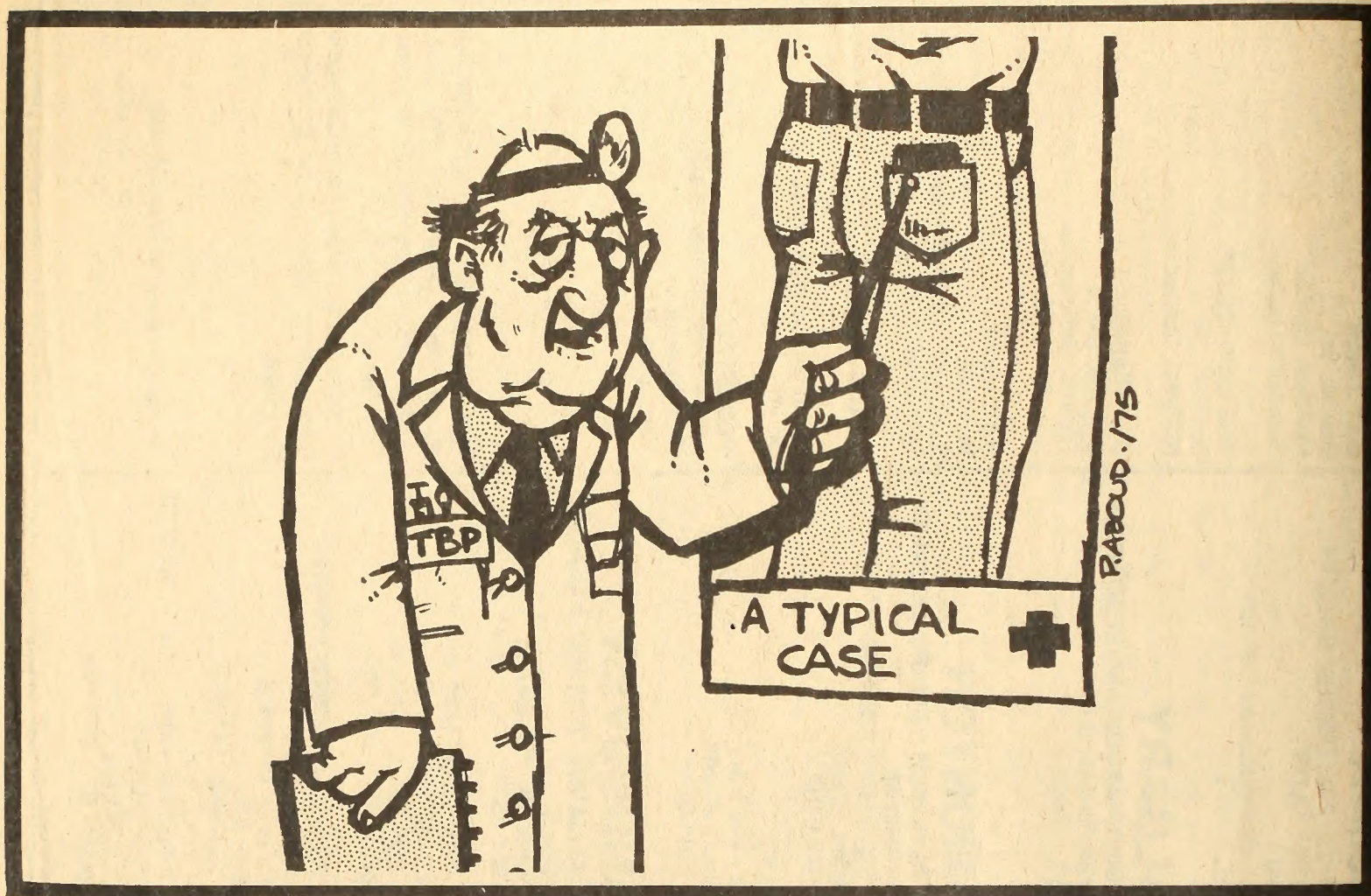
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